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FRANK LESLIE'S

BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY.

An Illustrated Journal of Amusement, Adventure, and Instruction.

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No. 647.—Vol. XXVI. NEW YORK, MARCH 15, 1879. Five Cents a Copy. $2.50 a Year, Postage Free.

READ OUR NEW STORIES.

Floating to Fortune; Or, Which was the Hero?

By JAMES REYNOLDS.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT AN UMBRELLA.

HAD "Old Probabilities" a quarter of a century ago approved himself the meteorological necessity he has since become, the journals of that day, as in this our era of Christian grace, would have announced, hours in advance, his valeination that there was certain promise of a cold, wintry night, notwithstanding it was early Autumn and the glorious Indian Summer yet to come; the wind cutting in from the northeast, chilling to the very marrow the lightly clad, and inflicting upon thin-blooded and sensitive people (who yet thought themselves exceedingly robust and endowed with a certain contempt for very variable climate) sore throats, hacking coughs and racking pains.

Toward sundown the gale, momentarily increasing in force, swept through the taut rigging of the ships that were moored to the docks of the great city, which girded its easterly and westerly bounds. And as the hoarse, deep voice of the blast rose and fell, there came a diapason of sounds, as if they had been poured out of an organ of unimaginable capacity.

These, as they saluted, bewildered the ears of the musically cultured, who, of necessity or pleasure, were brought within the lines of West and South Streets.

Then there came down upon the rivers and bays, the wind seeming to rise above, and, for the time, to not disturb it, a great, white, impenetrable fog. It was like a far-extending canopy. It penetrated everywhere. It fell upon the land and the water, upon Jersey City and Hoboken, Brooklyn and New York—an illimitable vail beneath which were hidden a company of brides.

Within these cities, away from the ebb and flow of the tide—where bells were sending forth a muffled series of alarms, and steam-whistles were endeavoring to outscreech each other—the fog had sufficiently condensed itself to fall heavily, like a Scotch mist, upon the walks and pavements, and make many carry their umbrellas open, to shield their persons from the uncomfortable moisture.

And, it being now past six o'clock, but not seven, the sidewalks were filled with the tens of thousands of laboring people, young and old, and of both sexes, who were hurrying homeward from the great workshops and storehouses of the metropolis.

In the tributary throngs which poured from the offices and warehouses of Broadway, the workshops of John, Nassau and William Streets, into the great human tide which struggled and surged along the narrow *trottoirs* of Fulton Street, flowing steadily toward the ferry, were a boy and girl.

Both were quiet and prepossessing.

"ONE DAY AF'ER DE FUN'RAL, I SEED MARSA HENRY GO INTO DE ROOM IN W'ICH HIM BRUDDER HAD GONE DEAD, AN' TAKE UP A BO'D OB DE FLO', AN' DEN I SEED HIM PUT A BUNDLE OB PAPERS 'WAY UNDER IT."

In the face of the girl there was a very sweet but tired expression. She looked, even to those who but hurriedly glanced at her and then on her companion as they hastened to "catch the boat," as if sickness and not fatigue was the cause of her weakness and nervousness.

The boy had no such look about him. His features were full and regular. His eyes were hazel and wide open; and, but for the softness, the pity which every now and then stole into them, would have impressed those who noticed him that his life was as a clear Summer day. His were laughing eyes. It seemed as if the controlling sentiment of the youth was hilarity—as if his soul fed and grew fat upon fun.

It was a blessed thing for him that he was so constituted.

The young girl gave a short, hacking cough.

The boy glanced at her. His manner was full of solicitude.

Drawing closer to her, he said, in a low voice:

"Alice, are you cold? That cough is coming upon you again. Dear mother will be worried about it."

The girl looked up. There was a world of sadness in her great, soft, dark-blue eyes.

"Alice, are you tired?" again asked the boy. "Tell me?"

There was a little hoarseness in her voice as she answered, smiling as she spoke:

"Oh, I'm ever so much better than I was, Tom. You know one may have a little cold and not be hurt by it. I've had mine now so long that I don't think anything of it. Sometimes, on a day like this, when I come out of the hot bindery, where I've been working so long and so busily, I feel like coughing just a little, you know, to get my throat clear."

Again the girl smiled. It was a very quiet and an assured smile.

Her companion did not, this time look down, in her face. He turned his eyes upward; and then, as if speaking to himself, said:

"It's nasty overhead; I wish I had an umbrella or something to cover Allie with. She'll be sick to-morrow. I guess I'll put her in a car when we get t'other side. It's so foggy I shouldn't wonder a bit if it'll be midnight before we see the supper-table. Won't I be hungry, though! I feel like an ostrich; and if there should be a keg

of nails lying around loose, I'll pity it—I will! Mighty! I begin to feel as if it wouldn't hurt me a bit to sit down to a good steak this minute."

The boy turned his eyes earthward. He looked inquisitively around him, but never in the face of his companion.

At the intersection of Gold Street, without lisping a word, he came to a halt,

He had espied a young gentleman, two or three years his senior, coming toward him.

He was an oddly appearing young man.

He was strangely attired, acted eccentrically, and looked out of his great gray eyes comically.

He did not mean it, this youth, to be either queer, eccentric or comic. But, unfortunately for him, nature had made him up in such strange fashion he could never by any possible chance have succeeded as an undertaker. He might, perhaps, have "engineered" a bar-room, or set himself up as the comic man of a newspaper, or clown to a circus, but in "running a funeral" he would certainly prove a sublime failure, for who could mourn in his presence? To look in his unusual visage, while he was conscientiously endeavoring to get himself up for the solemn occasion, would finish the job. Sorrow, in his presence, would indignantly spread her wings and take her flight to some more congenial sphere, while broad Humor, taking her place, would make the hearts of mourners glad.

The young gentleman had no thought of being funny. It was simply in him to look and act as he did, and he knew it not. His favorite book was the "Sorrows of Werther."

He was moving his short and somewhat rotund body along the walk, at a dog-trot pace, his face nearly as long as the one with his name, and his umbrella preventing him from noticing who was in his way, he stumbled against the lad whose name has thus far been known to us as Tom.

"Hello! what are you doing, Dick Price, stopping people in this way?" cried Tom.

"Hello yourself, old four-and-sixpence," returned the odd youth, raising his umbrella high enough to give him the opportunity of seeing with whom he had come in collision. "Oh, it's you, is it, Burt? Good boy! Say, wish's up!"

"Your umbrella is," Tom replied, gravely, as he pretended to rub his right cheek. "And it came near putting one of my eyes out."

"You don't mean to say so?" cried the young fellow. "Sorry, Tom, old chap. Shall I smash the thing? I'll do it, if it's any satisfaction to you, eh?"

Dick Price looked as if he meant it.

There was nothing further from his thought, however.

Tom laughed at the comical earnestness of his manner, and said:

"No, you needn't do that. Give me the parachute. I want it badly, so hand it over."

Dick Price closed the umbrella and then, on putting it under one of his arms, and thrusting his hand deep into his trowsers pockets, gave a long and low whistle.

"Thomas Burt, Esquire," he added, when this part of the performance had been successfully brought to a close, "I make no remark, as the governor says when he's a-talking to a jury in a soothing way, that this is the month of December. There'll be lots of sleighing done before Spring, besides sticking calves and cutting the throats of grass-fed lambs. But I will say particularly to know at this time is, do you see anything prominently green in my eye?"

"Well, no," laughed Tom. "I can't say I do. But I must have that umbrella."

"Well, that is very cool—very. I put it to you, Tom Burt, if it isn't? I don't give umbrellas to every one who asks me, I tell you, Tom, Thomas, Tommy. Do you want to know why? 'Cause I aren't got any to give. This is the old gentleman's. I left that very ancient institution, this morning, standing around with his specs on the top of his head, looking for this identical piece of gingham, and wondering to himself if he hadn't left it at home in the hall. And all the time, Tom, I was a-flourishing it in his fat, placid-looking face, and telling him if he had a pair of magnifying glasses on his little nose he could easily see halt an inch beyond it. This set him looking for his spectacles—binoculars, he calls 'em—and when I left the office he had every drawer in his secretary rumpled—the grand on finding things, you know—and they were a-straddle of his bald pate all the time, sitting as snugly to it as a saddle to a horse's back. Now, it being foggy and kind of damping to a fellow's new silk hat, it wasn't my fault, was it, if the governor chose to carry his spectacles on his head instead of on his nose, and couldn't see his parachute, particularly when I flourished the same right before his near-sighted eyes? When he gets home—if the fog 'll let him—he'll find it all nicely folded, hanging to a hook in the hall-rack, and, of course, he'll know he left it there. Tom, the governor is a brick, and——"

"Pity you didn't steal his spectacles, Dick. Then he couldn't see whether the umbrella was there or not. But I must have it. Don't you see what I want it for?"

"Upon my word I don't, Tom," returned Price, putting on a long face. "Really, I never was so confoundly blind before in all my life. I'm a respectable chip, split away from the old block, d'ye see?"

Turning his face toward Gold Street, he added, with a sigh:

"I'm like the old boy who always became deaf as a stone whenever an urgent creditor presented a little bill, asking him to square it up. I'd like to tell you the story of——"

"Bother the story!" interjected Tom Burt, growing quite impatient. "See here, I want to say something to you!"

Drawing Price nearer to him, he whispered, in a hurried manner, a few words.

When he closed his speech he nodded his head in the direction of Alice, who walked quite slowly down the street, wondering all the time what it was that kept her companion so long in conversation with the stranger.

"That's it, is it?" demanded Dick Price, as he placed in his friend's hands the umbrella. "Well, take it. I tell you what, old fellow, I'm just sorry. I don't care if the old gentleman don't find the thing when he gets home. Leave it at the office in the morning, and I'll put it right on his desk, where he'll say he never thought of looking for it."

Tom Burt hastened to the side of the girl.

"See, Allie," he said, as he raised the umbrella over her head—"see what I have to protect us. The fog has so much water in it that I was afraid we'd get wet to the skin before we got home, and so I borrowed this."

"Thank you, Tom!" returned the girl, with her quiet, pleasant smile and voice. "But what will the young gentleman do from whom you obtained it?"

"Oh, it don't make a particle of difference with him whether he has an umbrella or not. He's used to it, like, he would say, an unwelcome dog to kicking. I've taken it from him by way of punishment. He stole it from his father. He's a sinner, you see. I like to punish wicked people, Allie."

Tom Burt was quite gay.

He wanted to keep the poor girl's mind away from the cold, the fog, and above all, the cough.

"Well," muttered Dick Price to himself, as he buttoned his coat to his throat, first standing his collar high up about his ears, and then pulling his hat well upon his head, which he bent to the fog, going along with a reckless pace, not heeding his road or the damage he might do by butting some unoffending wayfarer—"well, I'm done for," he soliloquized. "I never loved a new umbrella, that when I came to know it well, but some stuck-up, confounded swell, toting along a pretty girl, with big, deep, dark, sweet blue eyes, full of coughs, and colds, and sighs, all of which he would to me tell, and then borrow my gold mohair. Well, I suppose it's my duty to extend the courtesies to the fair sex, but it's decidedly uncomfortable, may it please the court."

To further solace himself, Dick Price, with his head still bent down and pushed well out from his little fat body, commenced whistling in a dolorous way, "The Dead March in Saul."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT THE ALARM-BELL SAID.

At the ferry-house all was bustle and confusion; The bell at the end of the pier tolled every few seconds a funereal knell, that was, considering the density of the fog, not reassuring to the timid, whose imaginations were "bodying forth" terrible disasters and awful losses of life.

The open spaces between the bridges, the retiring-rooms set apart for ladies and gentlemen, the passages, and even the area without the gates, were crowded by uncomfortable wayfarers, who fondly hoped that some day in the not far future a bridge would be flung across the mighty stream, thus bidding defiance to snow and storm, to ice and fog, and in this way practically making, what they should long ago have been, the two cities one in population and purpose.

And while the multitude stood speculating and shivering, and giving undue range to their thoughts, the bell rang its solemn clang.

To their ears it sung, in a measured strain, many phrases. To some it said:

"Prepare! prepare! prepare to die!"

To others:

"Have no fear! have no fear! have no fear!"

In the midst of the great throng, but under the shelter of the roof of the ferry-house, stood closely together the boy and girl in whom we are interested.

"It makes me shudder," said the girl, placing a hand on the youth's right arm, "whenever I hear that bell. It has such a strange sound! It seems to me as if it was talking."

"What does it say to you, Allie?" asked the lad.

"I have my fancies sometimes. Its words, too. To me it says, 'Be of good cheer! be of good cheer! be of good cheer!'"

"That is strange, Tom," returned Alice. "It has just been telling me, 'Don't stand near! don't stand near! don't stand near!' I was particularly to know at this time is, do you see anything prominently green in my eye?"

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"Oh, that's nothing, Allie!" said the boy, reassuringly. "We've got something in our heads, and every noise seems to say, 'Be of good cheer!' when the saw goes whirring in the shop where I'm at work, it seems to strike up a tune. Often enough have I had it play for me 'Yankee Doodle' or 'Hail Columbia'—anything I chose to call for. It's in me all the time, and out in the saw, just as one she bears it, unless he should happen to get it up the same time in his head. Did you ever try it? Think of some other words that will chime in with the bell, and you'll hear it speak them."

Before the girl could attempt the experiment the boat had entered the slip, and the fog-bell had ceased its chime.

There was, instead, heard a rattling of chains and a grinding and squeaking of the bow of the boat against the pier-bridge.

Then succeeded a rush to the yet unopened inner gates, which gave entrance to the bridge and to the boat.

For a while the hungry, eager mob—it was now long past seven—surged to and fro, like angry, storm-urged waves.

Excitedly, and withal blindly, they strove, singly and in small companies, to get to the front, that they might secure places in the cabins or on the forward part of the boat.

And occasionally, from this dense mass of men and women, and even little children, there would come up prayers and imprecations—the former from the weak and cowardly, the latter from the reckless and the fearless.

"This is no place for you, Allie," whispered Tom Burt, pushing himself on one side, pulling the girl with him. "You will be pressed to death if we do not look out. These people are like the beasts we saw in the menagerie last week, only they're out of their cages, and their keepers are away. It would be better if we waited an hour or two longer. Who knows but the fog may lift then?"

The girl coughed slightly.

She placed a hand on her bosom as she replied:

"Perhaps it would be best for us to stop here. That is, I may. You can go home. If mother only knew where I was, I'd be satisfied. I think more of her than I do of myself, now. She'll be terribly worried by and by."

"I don't know as that'd mend the matter much," responded Tom, thoughtfully. "She may be displeased with me if I leave you. So come with me. I'll try and get into the ladies' room, and I'll remain with you."

The gates were now open, and in solid columns the passengers poured through them, and thence, like storm-urged waves, over the boat.

Tom Burt and his companion were caught up in this tide. They strove, but vainly, to get out of it.

Indeed, might they have attempted to beat back with a whip the whelming floods of the great sea.

Onward, onward they were carried. Onward, because helpless of themselves, were they urged, now through the gates, now over the bridge, even to the edge of it.

As they passed the former, the employés of the company, fearing to admit another one, suddenly closed them, thus dividing the mass, as if with a great cleaver, in twain; and when at last Tom Burt and Alice St. John found their feet pressing the planking of the bridge, the chains which held the boat to it were being loosened.

A moment and the craft was free.

"We must go over in the boat, Alice," whispered the youth. "There's no real danger. We can't stand here on the bridge to be pushed into the slip by the next crowd that rushes upon it. Come."

It was but a step.

Involuntarily the girl did as she was bidden.

Together the two stood upon the very end of the vessel—and without the chains.

"Hello, Tom Burt!" said a voice near where the youth was standing; "you're in a fix. Where's the gov's umbrella? Hope you haven't lost it! There'd be a revolution in the home of the Prices if you did, and perhaps there'd be an exile from it—sent to Salt River. I say, look out, Tom. "Wish I could change places with the young lady. But, although we may be a pathetic, we're not a moving crowd. *Gal*-lantry's at a standstill just now."

"Are you there, Dick?" returned Tom, who recognized the voice, but could not well see its owner. "If the fog spoils the parachute of yours—give it to the *log*—if I could, but there isn't room for it. Be careful, Alice," he added, in an undertone; "stand back as far as possible. Clutch at any one near you should the boat sway suddenly either way. I'm standing at the very end of the deck here. I feel as if I were on the edge of a precipice with the boiling water beneath me ready to swallow me up."

The youth had barely given utterance to these words when a cry of terror came from the forward part of the boat; and, immediately following it, there was a swaying to and fro. Then was heard, in a loud, hoarse voice:

"Look out! look out! Back the boat, pilot Back the boat, or we shall all be lost!"

The panic-stricken passengers on the forward part of the vessel ran backward as far as they could. They acted like frightened sheep in the presence of a pack of hungry wolves.

They forced upon those who were standing amidships—no vehicles or horses had been permitted on board—and these in turn pushed against those who were near the stern.

"Look out! look out!" was repeated in that quarter. "You'll force us overboard. Be quiet, will you, there?"

But there was no quieting the now excited passengers.

The pilot signaled the engineer to slow up, and finally to stop the wheels.

It was well he did so.

For the boat just touched, and then lay alongside of a ship that, in the earlier part of the day, had been brought to anchor almost in the path of the ferry.

There was now no real danger, but the men on the deck had not got over their fright. When they saw the black hull of the "tall admiral" looming before them, they thought destruction inevitable, and bounce the craft backward.

The simultaneous movement of the crowd and the sharp bringing about of the vessel threw young Burt off his balance.

Tom tried to recover himself, but it was too late.

He was pressed backward, and the quick cry of "A man overboard!" greeted the ears of all, as he pitched headforemost into the dark, sweeping tide.

Only a plash and a cry were heard coming up from the misty depths.

The fog seemed, at the moment, to have grown even thicker than before.

Alice St. John shrieked as she saw the form of her foster-brother—for such he had been—disappear.

She was seized with sudden dizziness, she trembled like an aspen leaf, and then, as her sight left her, became unconscious.

A strong, young hand had been stretched forth to save her.

Had not Dick Price been near, she, too, would have fallen into the river.

"Make way there, can't some of you!" he cried, "and let me get this girl out of danger. That was her brother who went overboard"—he could not help adding, in a mournful voice, and with a long face, although fun or humor was, at the moment, furthest from his thoughts—"with my umbrella. I don't see that he'll have any particular use for it now, although I heard my governor say he once knew a chap who went to commit suicide in the river on a rainy day, and who hoisted a parachute, that he might not get wet while on his way to fulfill his appointment."

No one laughed at the queer look or untimely speech of the young gentleman, but instantly extra efforts were made to open a passage for the conveyance of the poor girl to the ladies' cabin, where she was, so far as was then possible, cared for.

Meanwhile attention was given to the saving, if practicable, of the boy who had fallen overboard. Ropes and life-saving apparatuses were thrown into the water. The boat was cautiously moved near where it was supposed he might yet be floating, and stentorian voices shouted to him to be of good heart, as help was at hand.

But no voice answered these cheering cries.

Only could be heard by attentive listeners the throbbings of the water as it rippled and dashed against the hull of the vessel.

All else was still.

Away in the mists of the night it was felt that a fair young form was floating down the tide, out to sea, a stiffening corse, with eyes wide open and glassy, and that out of it another soul had been born and surely added to the innumerable hosts which gather around the white throne, and sing to the Lamb's psalms of joy and of praise forever.

A great, solemn silence fell upon the passengers.

It had gone forth among them that a lad had been pushed into the river, and that he had even been drowned.

There were no further cries.

No one bade the confused pilot to stop or turn his craft about now.

In the stillness there stole through the fog a voice—the voice of a bell.

It seemed to be calling out, as from a great distance, the assuring words:

"Fear not! fear not! fear not! It is well! It is well!"

The clang of the bell grew louder and clearer. And it sung the same words to throbbing hearts—words that each could clearly understand—and then there came a dull light; it could scarcely be distinguished by those who were on the boat, but the boatswain recognized it, and rejoiced.

He had gained his slip. His task was accomplished.

A faint cheer arose from the wayfarers; and then, when the vessel had been made fast, there was a mad rush up the bridge for the sure land.

And of all the hundreds who, a few moments before, had heard of the loss of one of their company, but one now recalled it.

That one was Dick Price.

Alice St. John was yet unconscious.

The young, kind-hearted fellow continued with her.

It was, indeed, midnight ere he had placed her within her mother's arms, and related, in his queer way, a story that filled that mother's heart with deep sorrow.

CHAPTER III.

THE WOMEN OF THE SWAMP.

A QUARTER of a century ago there stood, in the low meadows of Hob-ken, not *far* from the Jersey City line, and within a few minutes' walk of the "Heights," a low, rickety, one-story structure. It was an uncouth building. Its shingled roof was here and there patched with pieces of board and shreds of canvas and remnants of rusty sheets of iron; and where these were not, the original covering was clothed with a species of moss and fungus that seemed, even in the hottest and driest seasons, to be saturated with a putrid fluid that was offensive to even the coarsest sense of smell. Out from this roof sprang, tall and thin, and dangerously inclined from the perpendicular, a chimney that, it could not be denied, had become somewhat broken by the many wind-storms which had assailed it. Brick after brick had from it at times been lost in the oozy swamp which encircled the house; but, as a structure resting upon a slim foundation, its determination to stand was as remarkable as is that of the Tower of Pisa. The dwelling—it had in its earlier days reserved unto itself the

I tole her dat you wasn't comin', count ob de fog las' night an de rain ob dis day," answered his mother.

"Did you?" he returned, as he sprang out of the scow and stood in the doorway. "Well, I'se got suffin dat'll jest 'stonish yo'. 'bout dat dar fog. You 'member de St. Johns an de Burts folks wot used to lib on de James River, way up on de hills?"

"Sho," returned the mother, "wasn't we owned by dem Burts? an' good people to dar servants dey was."

"Hello, grun!" cried the boy, as he passed to the couch on which the old prophetess was. "Yo' out of bacey, is yo'? Well, heah is some for yo'. It'll sot yo' right up. It's de same as I smoke myself."

"Bress de chile!" she cried, in a delighted voice; "you's good, Jul'us Cæsar, I 'clar, an' I don't s'pect yo'll ever be hanged fo' it."

The ancient would have grown garrulous with her greetings had not her daughter, whose curiosity had been excited by her son's remark about the St. Johns and the Burts, interrupted her.

"Wot yo' got to say 'bout ole massa's people, an' dem odder folk? Dem St. Johns was done gone clean ruined by ole Massa St. John. De ole massa was all de time sportin' wi' dem hosses he had, an' one day de sheriff come 'long an' sold de place out. Den de ole massa he die ob grief, an' de young mis-ess, de wife ob his son w'at was killed in a pisin fight in Nor' Carline, dey said, went wif her little baby chile to Richmond. I 'member dat pic-nicsy. It was a lobly girl, an' it's modder was kin'-scend, I tole yo'. An' she did mar' wif a man whom our young Massa Burt die, wich was soon af'er de time his wife left him an' her chile an' run 'way wif de English nobleman, dey called him—and wasn't she de purty she debbil, I tole yo'!—he nebber leaking his son, de chile Tom, called 'Moss' himself, a debt, an' his brudder takin' de place an' sellin us niggers off ob it, an' dat's de way wese 'come free, she took dat same boy, Masse St. John did, an' said she'd be his mudder. Oh, she was a angel, dat same Missus St. John. She nebber'd let a hand on de place be ill-licked, if she could help it. Now w'at you hat to say 'bout dem, Jul'us Cæsar?"

"May I put my spokes in now, mammy?" demanded Jul'us, with a laugh.

"Shut," gravely replied his mother.

"All right, den. Now, heah goes. I tole yo' Masse Jef'son an' de young ladies had moved over to Brooklyn, 'cause dey tinks dey can spread dar-selbes dar wif impunenty, a-holdin' dar heads up cher so high. Well, las' night I'se had to go-pher dar in de midst ob de fog. I tole yo' I didn't like it. But I was on de boat, mixed up wif de rest ob dem. An' w'at yo' think? Well, dat young Massa Burt w'at yo' speak ob am no mo'."

"My, w'at yo' mean, Jul'us?" cried both the women in a breath.

"Dis: He was shoved oberboa'd, an' s'pect he was done gone drowned. Leastways, dey hollered to him, an' dey frowed tings at him to' to catch, but it was no kine ob use. De feller said a word back, no mo' 'an if he warn't dar."

"Gracious! dat ar' masse ob ours, Tom Burt, done gone drowned!" exclaimed the coachman's mother.

"I'se got de 'spiration upon me!" cried the old witch from the pallet, where, pulling vigorously at her pipe, she had enveloped herself in a cloud of tobacco-smoke.

"Neber mine de 'spiration now," interrupted her daughter. "Let's hav de res' ob w'at Jul'us hab to say. Go on, Jul'us Cæsar."

"Dar was a young woman wif Massa Burt," resumed Julius. "Dey two was standin' at de bery end ob de boat, 'cause dey couldn't get no nearer, an' w'en de young gemman was 'bout to fall off she would hab gone wif him but dat's de funniest-looking little fellow yo' ebber seed cotch an' sabe her. She jes' taunted, an' dat queer chap, he make yo' laugh to look at him, a'mos', drags her right frow dat ar crowd into de ladies' cabin an' tried to fotch her to. W'en de boat got on de right side, I went an' got a kerridge, an' I went wit de funny man an' de pore gal—an' she looks sick as well as purty—to de place whar dey lib."

"Wat kine ob lookin' lady am Misses St. John?" demanded Ophelia, greatly excited by the story she had just heard.

"Well," answered the coachman, "she am a nice woman, sho'. She be just de right size fo' a lady, I s'pects."

"Dat's not it, Jul'us," interrupted his mother, in an impatient tone. "You know what I means. Has she brack eyes, an' brack ha'r, an' small, lily-w'ite hands, an' has she a nice smile, an' does she spoke in a low voice?"

"Dat's her, 'xactly, mammy," replied Julius. "You hab jes' got right dar. How you know so much?"

"An' w'at did dey call de little gal?" she continued.

"Lemme see," the boy pondered. "I heard her spokes her name. It was—lemme see—it was—I aw'ar, mammy, I'se fo'gotten it now, sho'."

"Was it Alice?" cried the impatient negress.

"Dat's w'at dey call Misses St. John's chile w'at went down to Richmond to, sho'."

"I guess yo' hab struck dat nail on de head squa' dis time, mammy," returned Julius. "I t'inks dat am de name dey called her. Yes, it am, fo' 'member now dat dat's de name ob one ob dem Jef'sons. Yes, I 'member it, sho'."

"See heah, Ophsley," again cried the ancient, from the couch. "I wants to spoke suffin' to yo' an' Jul'us. I'se got de 'spiration on to me."

"W'at you want to say, granny," said Julius, approaching the cot. "Talk fo' shut, an' we'll lis'n to yo'. Mammy's got w'at she wanted to know 'bout dem St. Johns, and our own people, de Burts. Now, yo' go on."

"Bress dat boy," murmured the crone. "Jul'us, yo' grub me per hand." "Now yo' lis'n, fool of yous. Dem folk was cheated clean out of der property—dem St. Johns, an' so was de young Marse Tom Burt. W'en de chile's fader was dyin' I was in de nex' room, but dey didn't 'spect it, beider de marse or his brudder, Marse Henry, w'at now be owner ob de Corn Hill plantation. Well, yo' see, Marse Tom he say to Marse Henry, 'I want you to take good kar of my boy, brudder. I'se made my will. It is dar in dat yer drawer in my desk. W'en I die you be Tom's guardeen.' I 'fink dot am de word—an' w'en he's a man, he'll be de owner ob de Corn Hill farm, an' all dem servants wot's on to it.' Well, Marse Tom die, an' Marse Henry swo' to de loks wot come to be buryin' dot Marse Tom die a beggar —pore as a church-mouse—an' dat de place was his. Den he was 'saked if de dead man had lef' a will, an' he say No, 'cause he hab nuffin' to leab. I didn't say nuffin', fo' yo' know a stabe's word am of no 'count in de bout, but I watched close. Ole day af'er de fun'ral, I seed Marse Henry go into de room in w'ich him brudder had gone dead an' take up a bo'd ob de flo', an' den I seed him put a bun-dle ob papers 'way under it. W'en he done dat, he put de board back carefully, an' went 'way. I say nuffin to no one, but I jes' kept my eye on dat yere spot in de room whar dat package was put. It war uebber teched agin by-him. W'en we was sold away from de ole home, I jes' went up to whar dem papers was, an' I raise de board an' I took 'em wif me. I hid dem under my petticoat when I traveled. I'se kep' 'em by me ebber since, and no one hab ebber asked me 'bout dem. I s'pect I can't read, but I'se all'ays tought dey wos dem will an' tings w'at Marse Tom had tole his brudder, dat dark Marse Henry, blood."

Julius, in turn, became greatly excited.

"Hab you dem papers now, granny?" he asked.

"Bress de chile, I hab dem," she answered.

"Let's see dem, won't ye?" he entreated.

"W'at's de use, Jul'us?" Yo' can't read. If yo' could, they'd be yours, sho."

The coachman pondered a moment.

"See heah, granny," he cried, breaking the silence; "I kin fix dat ar trouble."

"Bress de boy," she entreated. "How, Jul'us?"

"Lemme look at dem fus' an' den I'll tole yo' w'at am in my mine."

"Berry well," returned the ancient. "Heah dey am."

The prophetess withdrew from under her pillow a cloth, dirty from long use, and yellow from age.

Putting down her pipe, she unrolled it slowly, and when the final fold had been removed, there appeared a small package of papers, each neatly folded, and together about an inch in thickness.

The papers, when it is remembered how long they had been in the blind woman's possession—but not blind when she secreted them on her person—were in excellent condition.

"Dese am lawyer's papers, granny," said Julius.

"Dat I knows when she looks ob dem. I'll tole yo' w'at I'll do. Lemme take 'em wif me to Brooklyn, an' I'll get dat funny gemman w'at saved de young lady from goin' overboard wif Marse Burt, to read 'em."

"No, no, Jul'us," the crone cried, as if she were about to be robbed of a fortune; "dey nebber goes out ob dis house 'cept it be into de hands of dar rightful owner."

"But, granny," responded the coachman, "he am done gone drowned. I seed him go into de riber myself las' night, sho'."

"Den I'll burn dem," she returned.

"Don't do dat," he pleaded. "Yo'se don't know de trouble yo' might cause—de wrong yo' might do. I swar to gracious I'll bring dem back to yo' safe an' soun'. De young man w'at I tole yo' 'bout is Marse Price. His fader am a lawyer, an' he am de friend of pore dead an' gone Marse Tom Burt, an' ob Misses St. John an' her mudder."

"I don't trus' Jul'us," said the witch, decidedly. "I'se don't let dem papers go from heah, 'cept to dar owner."

"Berry well," said the boy. "Say, granny, ef I fotches dat Price heah, will yo' let him read dem?"

"W'hat Price am he?" "Am he a L'zington Price, ob Varrinny? If he am, he can't see dem," was her answer.

"He's a Brooklyn Price," and Julius smiled as he spoke. "He tole me las' night he was a gem of un-known Price, and above all Price."

"He may read de papers," whispered the ancient, as she resumed her pipe.

(To be continued.)

THE BOY BOSS;

Or,

The Hidden Fortune.

A SEQUEL TO SPIDER AND STUMP.

By Bracebridge Hemyng,

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AUTHOR OF THE "JACK HARKAWAY" AND "DICK LIGHT-HEART" STORIES, ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

SPIDER IS RUINED.

IT was about twelve o'clock at night on the second day of Spider's adventurous cruise, and the boy was nearly worn out with anxiety and watching.

He had given up all hope of finding Stump, and only hoped that he might have the good luck to be picked up by some passing ship.

Feeling that he had refused to do any further duty, and had drunk so much rum that he was lying in the cabin, motionless.

Being unable to arouse him, Spider gave up the attempt and paced the deck of the schooner, steeped in a deep melancholy.

What would become of him?

His situation was growing more serious every hour, for he did not know where he was drifting, and at any moment he might be dashed on some rock-bound shore and be drowned.

If a storm arose he could not manage the schooner, which would be entirely at the mercy of the wind and waves.

While he was lamenting his hard fate he heard the sound of an approaching steamer.

Once before he had narrowly escaped being run down, and he held his breath in terror.

Steadily the regular beat of the paddle-wheels increased in loudness as the ship came nearer.

He could see the lights on board and make out the dim outline of the floating monster, which was faintly silhouetted against the dark sky.

The schooner did not show any light, and the pilot of the steamer could not be blamed for keeping on his course.

Spider mounted the taffrail and screamed at the top of his voice; but the mocking wind carried his warning shrieks in an opposite direction.

He saw that there was little, if any, possibility of avoiding a collision, and, waiting till the steamer was within a few yards of the schooner, he plunged head first into the sea.

There was a sickening crash, and the schooner disappeared from view, being cut completely in half.

She sank instantly, carrying Pompey to the bottom with her, his drunken sleep being his last on earth.

Spider soon came to the surface and looked around him, discovering the steamer a little to the westward.

"Help! help!" he cried, at the top of his voice.

Being a good swimmer, he struck out for the ship, which was motionless on the waves, her engines being stopped immediately on the shock of the collision being felt.

Her decks were crowded with passengers, who had been roused from their berths in the dead of night, and the cries of the women and children were pitiable in the extreme.

Fortunately, Spider's appeals for help were heard, and a boat was lowered, which picked him up.

By this time he was nearly exhausted, for he had been in the water twenty minutes, and it was bitterly cold.

"Were there any more on board?" asked the officer in command of the boat.

"Only a nigger," replied Spider; "and he was drunk."

The boat was pulled back to the steamer, and when he was hoisted up to the davits the ship continued her course, not having been materially injured by the collision.

Spider told his story to the captain, who was very much surprised at it.

The steamer was bound for New York, which city was reached in forty-eight hours.

It was much to Spider's surprise that he found he had drifted so far out to sea.

When the city was reached, and Spider landed, he proceeded at once to the house in which old Cris and Edie lived, they being the only friends he had.

They were quite delighted to see him, and listened to his adventures with great interest.

"I guess you will give up all idea of the money now?" said the clown.

"Not I," replied Spider.

"But Binnacle Jim will have got away with it, sure, and you can't claim it."

"That's true enough," Spider said. "Yet, I've been thinking that Jim will not find it so easy to get off the island."

"Why not?"

"For this reason: I ran away with his schooner, and the only craft he could get is the fishing-smack belonging to old Salt, and Salt won't let him have that if he can help it."

Edie put her hands together appealingly.

"Please don't go," she said. "We open to-night in our pantomime, and I want you to see me act. I am to be the Fairy Princess."

"It is a great inducement, certainly."

"Will you stay?"

"I cannot. In a few hours I shall be at sea again."

"Oh! ain't you horrid!" exclaimed Edie, pouting her lips.

"My dear," said Spider, "I shall have lots of opportunities of seeing you, if, as I trust, the business is good."

"It ought to be," remarked the clown, "for I have laid out money enough on it."

Spider wished them every success, and after dining with them, started for the East River, where he speedily engaged another tug, taking care to avoid the one which had deserted him.

Before nightfall they had cleared the narrows and were speeding toward Bird Island.

Spider was armed, and he resolved to shoot Binnacle Jim as he would a dog if he offered any resistance.

When the island was reached he went ashore at it boat-landing near Old Salt's house.

He passed the spot where Dave was buried, and saw a second newly-made grave.

Wondering who its occupant was, he knocked at the door, which was opened by Hen.

His face was grief-worn, and he appeared to have been shedding recent tears.

"What's happened," asked Spider.

"My father's dead," was the sad reply.

"How?"

"It is a simple story, and easily told. Binnacle Jim got aboard our fishing-boat, father ordered him off, and Jim fired, shooting father through the heart."

"And the boat?" asked Spider, eagerly; "did he get away with the boat?"

Hen looked annoyed.

"You seem to take more interest in the boat than you do in father's fate?" he said.

"Pardon me; you do not know how serious a matter this is to me."

"Yes, he did get away with the boat, by slipping the cable and hoisting the sail, while I was carrying father into the house. When I came out with my gun to shoot the murderous villain he was out of range, and his mocking laughter came across the water."

Spider felt faint.

The disappointment was bitter and intense.

"There go all my hope of a fortune!" he muttered.

It was useless to go to the stone cross and look for the bags of gold, because he knew very well that Binnacle Jim was too shrewd a fellow to leave the island without the money. Thanking Henry for his information, and sympathizing with him on his loss, he prepared to return to the boat.

"Stop a moment!" exclaimed Hen.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Spider.

"Is that tug riding at anchor yours?"

"I have hired her."

"Will you give me a passage to New York?"

"Willingly."

"I feel I must leave the old homestead. The family is broken up, and in New York I shall find the murderer of my father."

"How do you know that?"

"The fellow will naturally go to a great centre like the City of New York. He would be lost in the country; rogues always are. A man like Binnacle Jim is vicious, and he can only be happy with vicious companions. You may put away a thief in prison, and as soon as he gets out he will return to his old haunts."

"And if you meet him?"

The young man's face assumed a terrible expression.

"I will slay him," he replied. "Is it not my right? He murdered my father and my brother."

"That is so."

"The Lord has made me an instrument to kill this man. I feel it."

"But," said Spider, "the law will not hold you guiltless."

"I care not. My life is blighted, anyhow, and they can do what they like with me when I have wreaked my vengeance on that villain."

"You will want money."

"I have plenty. The old man was always saving up for us boys, and we never sold a cargo of fish but what he put aside something in his trunk for us. Wait, while I put up a bundle and get the money. You shall be paid. Never fear."

"You misunderstand me," said Spider.

"Oh, no. Of course, I can't expect you to take me for nothing. Pay as you go is the way of the world."

"No, no; not in this case," Spider replied. "I was only thinking of yourself. I won't take a penny from you. Don't you remember how you befriended me?"

Hen made no reply, but disappeared in the house, where he was gone five minutes. When he came out he had a bundle in his hand.

He walked straight to the graves of his father and brother, and kneeling down, raised his face to heaven.

His lips moved, but no word came from them.

He was registering a vow that he would avenge his kinsmen's death.

"I wouldn't like to have that young fellow after me," thought Spider. "Binnacle Jim's life isn't worth much if he comes across him."

Rising to his feet, Henry joined Spider, and together they walked to the boat, which speedily conveyed them to the tug.

The return to New York was uneventful, and when the city was reached, Henry took leave of Spider, saying:

"You will hear of me in the papers. I shall kill that man, and they will hang me, I suppose."

"I, too, am looking for him," replied Spider.

"You?"

"Yes."

"What harm has he ever done you?"

"He has robbed me of my fortune," replied Spider.

"Bah!" said Henry. "What is that compared to that which he has robbed me of? You have lost money?"

"I have."

"Well, money comes and goes. You can make more money; but he has robbed me of the life of one who was near and dear to me, and of another who was more than my life. Can he give me back those loved ones?"

"He cannot."

"We must not travel together," said Henry, earnestly. "I am an instrument in the hands of the Lord. In fact, I am an executioner. Good-by, perhaps for ever!"

Wringing Spider's hand, Henry darted away, and was rapidly lost to sight amid the crowd which thronged South Street.

It was clear, to even a superficial observer, that the young man's mind was deranged.

The solitary life he had led on the island, added to the death of his father and brother, had disordered an intellect which, at the best, was never very brilliant.

Spider hurried to his friend Cris.

To his surprise, he found the old clown and Edie in tears.

"Why, old pard!" exclaimed Spider, "what's the matter with you?"

"Bad, bad!" was the reply, as Cris shook his head dolefully.

"Has the new play turned out a failure?"

"The theatre's busted, sir."

"What!"

"Gone up clean."

"Never!"

"Higher than a kite, sir."

Spider was at a loss to understand this news, because the new and gorgeous pantomime had only been on the boards for a night or two, and there had been scarcely time enough to tell whether it was a success or a failure.

"I never mind," he said.

"But I do mind. I've lost your money," replied the clown.

"There is more where that came from. Tell me how it happened."

"It was this way," Cris said. "I owed a man two thousand dollars, and he heard I'd got to be the boss of a theatre, so yesterday he seized all the costumes, and wouldn't let the performance go on."

Spider smiled.

"That is a difficulty easily surmounted," he exclaimed.

"How?"

"Take my check on the Freshville bank and get it cashed. We will have a performance to-night."

"God bless you!" cried the clown.

As for Edie, she seized his hand and kissed it.

"You are indeed a generous benefactor. How can I thank you, sir?" she said.

"By saying nothing about it."

He sat down and wrote out a check, which he handed to Cris.

"You will have to go to Hunter's Point and take the cars to Freshville," he exclaimed. "To get the money this is necessary, as I know no one in New York who will certify the draft. But it won't take you long, and little Edie and I will talk away the time till you return."

Cris nodded, and seizing his hat, was off in a flash to get the check cashed.

When he was gone, Spider took a seat on the sofa by the side of Edie.

"May I sit here?" he asked.

"Why, certainly," she replied. "Who has a better right?"

"Thank you. I would have given the old man the money if I had it, but my personal cash is reduced to a few dollars. However, there is plenty in the bank, thank goodness."

"It must be nice to be rich," Edie remarked.

"I don't know so much about that," replied Spider. "Money brings its cares. I was happier when I had nothing, and I'd rather not be my own boss. Look at the bother I have had. Poor Stump is gone!"

"I feel sorry for Stump. He was a nice boy."

"A rough diamond, requiring a little polish, that is all."

"I wonder if I shall ever be rich?" said Edie.

"One day you will," replied Spider.

"Indeed! Can you prophesy?"

"Oh, yes. Didn't you know I could tell fortunes?" exclaimed Spider.

"No. Who ever heard of such a thing as a boy telling fortunes?"

"I can, though."

"Will you tell mine?"

"With pleasure," replied Spider

"What must I do?"

"Show me your hand. That is it. A pretty little hand."

"What do you see?"

"The line of life is perfect. You will live long and die happy. The line of luck is clearly defined. You will meet with good fortune when you are nineteen years old."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, my dear."

"What kind of luck?"

"You will marry the young man of your choice, who will be rich, so that you will have money and love," replied Spider.

"What is his name?"

"It begins with M, and his given name is Harry."

"Oh!" cried Edie, laughing, "that is too bad. You have been fooling me."

"Indeed I have not," replied Spider, earnestly.

Edie laughed loud, and holding up her finger reprovingly, said:

"Don't you know it is wrong to tell stories? M means Martin, and Harry is yourself."

Spider put on a bold look.

"Well, suppose it is, wouldn't you have me for a husband if I offered?" he exclaimed.

"Wait till the time comes."

"I won't wait. Give me an answer now."

"You haven't offered."

"Haven't I? Then I will," said Spider, gallantly. "Will you have me for your husband, Edie, dear?"

"Yes, Harry, I will," replied the little maiden; "only we must wait till we are old enough."

Then they both looked very foolish, but felt very happy, and they talked about the future, as young people will, and I am ashamed to say that Spider kissed Edie, and Edie got very red in the face, and told him that it was too bad, and he must not do it again, but in spite of this prohibition he did do it again, whereat she playfully gave him a box on the ear.

So the time passed very pleasantly — so quickly, indeed, that it grew dark before they knew it, and Edie lighted the gas, while Spider went out into the Bowery and bought Edie an engagement-ring, which he put on the third finger of her left hand.

"You must never take that off, darling," he said.

"I will wear it as long as I live, Harry," she replied.

At length Cris returned from Freshville. His face wore a very lengthened expression, and it was clear that something of an unpleasant nature had happened.

"Anything wrong?" asked Spider, his heart fluttering.

"Yes," replied Cris.

"Where's the money?"

"I haven't got it."

"Why not?"

"The Freshville Bank has suspended, and they say it won't pay ten cents on the dollar."

This was a great shock to Spider, for it was his utter ruin.

All the money he had was in that bank, and now that Binnacle Jim had got away with the hidden fortune, he was poor indeed.

But even in the hour of his own great, overwhelming misfortune, he thought more of the disappointment which this would be to Cris.

"My friend," he said, "this is a body blow, and I feel sorry for you."

"For me?" replied Cris.

"Yes. The theatre must remain closed. I cannot help you. All my wealth was in the broken bank. I am ruined."

"Oh, bother the theatre! It is you what I am thinking about," answered Cris. "What will you do?"

"I shall return to Freshville for a day or two and live with Mrs. Flannigan, until I can get some position which will enable me to support myself."

Old Cris shook his head.

"You cannot do that," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Mrs. Flannigan is dead."

"Dead! poor old soul," exclaimed Spider, much hurt. "When and how did she die?"

"Some time ago, she was attacked by a strange man, and never recovered from the injuries she received at his hands."

"The villain!"

This was Binnacle Jim, though Spider did not know who the assailant of his aged relative was.

"It appears," continued Cris, "from what I heard, that the old lady owed a little money in Freshville, and the creditors have seized the house for debt."

"Seized it?"

"Yes, so you see, my poor boy, that you have no home."

Spider sat down on the sofa, and for the first time in his life felt inclined to cry.

It was very hard to be deprived of money, home and friends, all at one fell swoop.

"I am alone in the world now," he muttered.

"No, not alone while we live," said Cris. "Just so long as we have a crust you shall share it with us."

"Oh, yes," chimed in Edie, "we will all work, and I am sure God will help us to get along somehow, for He always helps those who help themselves."

By the exercise of a great effort Spider refrained from crying, though his eyes were moist with tears.

He was only a boy, after all, and he could not be expected to exhibit the fortitude of a man.

"I've got a few dollars left out of the money you gave me," said Cris, "and we can rub along; perhaps the theatre troubles will be over soon, and we shall get something out of that; any way, we must all live together and work for one another."

It was so arranged.

Spider obtained a room in the same house, and the next day they all sought employment.

Edie obtained an engagement at a theatre as a ballet-girl, at six dollars a week; Cris got the place of check-taker in a museum in the Bowery, and Spider sold morning and evening papers.

Thus they all had money enough to live upon.

Spider had not felt so happy since he had come into his fortune, and did not regret losing his position as the Boy Boss.

It was a great change for him; still he got used to it, and felt that there was nothing degrading in getting his own living, no matter how humble the manner in which he did it.

The man or boy who works is sure to respect himself.

It is only the loafer and idler, who eats the bread of others, who feels ashamed of himself.

One evening, when Spider was selling *Telegrams* up-town, he was accosted by a stylishly dressed individual, who was lounging on the steps of the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

"Boy!" exclaimed the gentleman.

Spider thought he recognized that voice.

"Yes, sir. Paper, sir?" he replied, coming up.

The gentleman took a paper and tossed him a dime.

"Will you wait while I make change, sir?" asked Spider.

"Keep it."

"Thank you, sir."

The gentleman took out a massive gold watch and consulted it.

"Just about time," he muttered. "If I am as lucky as I was last night I shall do well."

He strode away, and Spider followed closely at his heels, for he had recognized him.

It was Binnacle Jim, dressed in the height of fashion, blazing with diamonds, and looking like a man of money.

He was no longer the poor sailor.

Fine feathers make fine birds, and it was evident that he had used some of Spider's money very effectually in disguising himself as a gentleman.

Spider determined to follow him wherever he went, and having found out his residence, he would ask Cris's advice as to what he should do.

Binnacle Jim walked along Sixth Avenue till he came to Twenty-fifth Street, where he turned up toward Broadway and entered a brown-stone, high-stoop house.

Spider waited outside.

The police officer on the beat came up.

"Got a new stand, bub?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Spider.

"You ought to do well here."

"Why so?"

"This is the great gambling-house, and you'll see lots of gents go in and out."

"Indeed! May I stay here?"

"I shan't move you," replied the officer, good-naturedly.

"I hope I'll soon sell out, for I'm hungry, and want to go home," said Spider.

"Wish you luck!" the officer exclaimed, as he went on, swinging his club.

So Spider waited outside the great gambling-house.

Many men came and went, but none of them seemed inclined to buy papers; their minds were intent upon other things besides papers, and they were all in a feverish hurry.

Twelve o'clock struck.

Spider had been standing in the street for five hours, and Binnacle Jim had not yet come out.

He was tired, and cold and hungry, but he would not give up.

Being on the track of the man who had stolen his money, he resolved not to lose the opportunity.

Perhaps he would never have another.

At a few minutes past midnight a man pushed up against him.

Spider had fallen asleep, leaning against the railings, with his papers under his arm.

"Get out of the way, boy," said the man, testily.

"Beg pardon," replied Spider.

"Isn't it time you were home and in bed?"

Spider rubbed his eyes and looked the man in the face.

"Hen!" he ejaculated.

It was Hen, the only remaining son of Old Salt.

"Is it you?" said Hen.

"Ye-a."

"What are you doing here?"

"Watching."

"Whom?"

"*He's* inside," exclaimed Spider.

"Ha! I thought so," said Hen, while his features lighted up with an expression of delight.

"You are looking for him?"

"I am."

"Well," said Spider, philosophically, "it is his fate."

Hen made no answer, but sprang up the steps and rang the bell.

Presently the door opened and he passed in, being soon lost to sight.

Still Spider waited, his heart beating wildly.

He felt that something was going to happen that night. He thought there would be a tragedy, and he was powerless to stop it.

Slowly the hours went by.

The cold gray dawn of morning stole over the sky, and the slumbering city began to awake.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAVED.

THE terrible situation in which we left Stump was calculated to appall the stoutest mind.

He slept, however, during the night, though his dreams were of the most alarming kind:

Now he was drowning in the angry sea, anon he was falling over a precipice.

His visions were awful.

In the morning he awoke without feeling at all refreshed.

The birds had got used to him now, and flew in and out of the cavern without taking any notice of him.

With the return of daylight he made an inspection of the cavern, but was unable to find any means of egress.

He was a close prisoner.

There was only one way of getting out, and that was the way he had got in.

The sullen roar of the sea dashing against the rocks below was the only sound which reached his ears, except the harsh cries of the birds as they flew in an out and gyrated in the air.

"I won't die of starvation," said Stump to himself. "I'll kill birds, and eat them raw. I'll suck eggs, too, and when I can get neither one or der other, I'll jump down on der rocks, and that'll be er-dead sure way of dyin'."

He sat at the entrance to the cavern, looking out.

Suddenly he saw the rope dangling before his eyes.

Tiragger had not deserted him.

There was a gleam of hope yet.

He guessed now that Tiragger had given up the attempt to rescue him the evening before, because it was growing late, and that he had come to see what he could do for him.

Oh! if he could only catch hold of the rope!

It began to sway backward and forward as if it was being purposely agitated from above.

Lying down on his stomach, he stretched out his arm over the yawning abyss.

It came nearer and nearer.

Once he almost touched it.

"Patience!" he muttered.

Again it grazed his fingers, and he stretched out a little more.

Slowly it swayed toward him.

He caught it this time, but the recoil was so strong that he was drawn right out of the cavern.

A terrible cry of despair escaped him.

He was now swinging in the air, many feet from the rocks, and almost an equal distance from the top of the precipice.

The rope was fortunately knotted at the end which he was madly grasping, and that prevented it from slipping through his fingers. He held on like grim death.

A voice, which seemed to be away up in the clouds, encouraged him to persevere.

"Hold on!" cried Tiragger. "Don't let go. It will be all right if you stick to it."

He did hold on, though the weight of his body seemed to be dragging his arms out of their sockets. The pain he suffered was intense.

Never before had he endured so much agony.

Slowly he felt himself ascending as the rope was drawn up, and in short space of time—though it seemed an age to him—he was grasped by the arm and lifted up.

Then he fell back, half fainting, on the green sward.

"You durned little fool!" said Tiragger, "what did you want to slip the rope for and give me all this trouble?"

"I couldn't help it," replied Stump, feebly.

"It taught you a lesson, I guess."

"Yer bet it did. I wouldn't pass such another night for millions!"

"Well, you'll have to go down again."

"What for?"

"In the first place, the basket, in the second, eggs and birds."

"I can't do it."

"You must."

"Let up on me, boss. It'll drive me crazy!"

"If you refuse I'll lick you. Think it over, and take your choice. There is no danger, if you keep the rope around your waist," said Tiragger.

Stump did think it over, and the conclusion he came to was that it was better to go after eggs than to be subjected to the harsh discipline of his cruel taskmaster.

Accordingly, he submitted to have the rope fastened round him, and he was lowered down.

All that day he worked.

For an entire week he was similarly engaged, but no accident happened to him.

After the first day he got used to it, and did not mind swinging in the air, with the blue sky above him and the foaming sea beneath.

At length Tiragger had got all the eggs and bird-skins he wanted, and announced his intention of going back to the main land.

"Will yer take me with yer?" asked Stump.

"What good will you be to me?" replied Tiragger.

"Not much, but I want to go home."

"How will you get there?"

"Won't you pay me my wages?" asked Stump.

"Devil a cent will you get out of me, my lad," replied Tiragger.

"I don't care. Walkin's good, an' I can tramp it," Stump answered, bravely.

"On those terms, I'll give you a passage in my boat. Get aboard."

Stump was delighted at the concession, and springing on board, was soon sailing over the sea toward the coast of Maine.

When it was reached Tiragger wished him good-day, and told him to start and not be found hanging around that section.

Stump started at once, and begging bread during the day and sleeping wherever he could by night, he managed to travel on foot toward New York, at which city he arrived in three weeks, weary, footsore and travel-stained.

His next task was to get over to Long Island, and he was lucky enough to find a nickel in the street.

This paid the fare of the ferry, and the rest was easy.

"I thought I'd have ter swim der East River. Blame der old Islands, I say! What der people want ter live on islands for, anyway?" he said.

He walked to Freshville and passed through the streets without being recognized.

Many old friends did he meet, but no one took any notice of the poor, ragged, limping, footsore tramp.

When he came to Cummins's, the barber, he opened the door and said:

AN IOWA CASABIANCA.—A YOUNG LAD DASHES THROUGH A FIRE TO SAVE HIS FATHER'S HAY-STACKS AND IS FATALLY BURNED.

A FALLING ACROBAT.

THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE.—A DOG "SLIDES" ON HIS OWN ACCOUNT.

"Please give me er penny, sir, ter buy some bread?"

"Haven't got anything for beggars," replied the barber.

"I'm real hungry," persisted Stump.

"Go and work."

"Can't get no work. Please give me er penny, sir."

"Get out, you tramp, or I'll make you," shouted the barber.

"I'll tell Spider of you."

The barber turned pale at this threat.

"Who—what do you mean?" he stammered.

"Ah, go 'long! You're too fresh."

Cummins looked curiously at him.

"Been my soul, if it ain't Stump!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it is Stump," replied that individual, "and I don't want none of your guff, so I tell yer, cull."

"I thought you'd gone for good."

"Ain't got rid of so easy."

"I hope you'll behave yourself, Stump. Where's Spider?"

"Don't know. If anybody asks yer, say yer can't tell dem," replied Stump.

"Go along! You've as bad as ever."

"Same ole Bowery boy; same ole Comanche. So long, cull. I'll come an' see yer soon."

Stump kissed the tips of his fingers to him and quitted the shop, but as he did so he "accidentally" shoved his elbow through a pane of glass.

He ran away, followed by the execrations of the barber.

Reaching home he saw his father chopping wood in the yard.

"Anybody name of Green live around here?" inquired Stump.

"That's my name," replied his father.

"I've brought you a message from your son, Dick."

"Ah! Where is he?"

"Dead."

"You don't say so!" cried Mr. Green, throwing down his ax.

"I ain't in the habit of tellin' lies, ole man."

"How did he die?"

"Got drowned at sea; fell overboard."

"Poor fellow! I always said he'd come to a bad end," exclaimed Mr. Green.

At this Stump opened the gate and walked into the yard.

"Don't yer know me, dad?" he asked.

"Why, Dick, is it you?" cried his father.

"Yes, it's me. Thought I was dead, didn't yer? and never shed no tear; nary tear. But yer's sucked in."

"Glad to see you."

"Yes, you are, in a horn."

"Where's Spider?"

"Gimme something ter eat. I'm most starved, and when I've satisfied my hunger I'll graterify yer curiosity as well's I can."

Mr. Green took him in, and he was soon overwhelmed with caresses by his mother, who was delighted to see him again.

The best the house afforded was placed before him, and he did justice to it.

"Fust square meal I've had in two months," he remarked.

The news of his return got about. Dermaty, Griffin, and others came in, and his story was listened to with the utmost attention.

He was the hero of the hour.

CHAPTER XIV.

RETRIBUTION.

AT length the perseverance displayed by Spider was rewarded.

It was quite time that it was, for he was worn-out and exhausted.

The door of the great gambling house opened, and Binnacle Jim flushed with wine, descended the steps.

After him came Henry, the frenzied son of the murdered fisherman.

Spider saw a knife raised in the air.

Before he could call out, even if he had had the inclination to do so, it had descended, and was plunged into Jim's back up to the hilt.

The wretched man fell to the sidewalk with a deep groan.

Henry stood over his victim.

"Run," said Spider. "Save yourself."

"I want to see him die," was the reply.

"But the police will arrest you. Fly!"

Henry reluctantly quitted the spot, but he had not gone far before he returned.

A policeman at this juncture came up.

"What's all this?" he asked.

"Man stabbed," replied Spider.

"Did you see it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who did the cutting?"

Spider was silent, not wishing to betray his friend.

"I did," said Hen, boldly.

"Then you are my prisoner."

"Hands off!" cried Hen, springing up the steps as the officer attempted to seize him.

He drew a pistol, and putting it to his head, literally blew his brains out.

His corpse fell upon Binnacle Jim, covering him with blood.

Spider shuddered at the double tragedy.

The policeman rapped for assistance, and Binnacle Jim was taken to the police-station, Spider being arrested as a witness.

A surgeon at once pronounced Jim's wound fatal.

The villain opened his eyes and caught sight of Spider.

"You here, boy?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Who stabbed me?"

"Henry."

"Who in thunder is Henry?" asked Jim.

"The son of the fisherman on Bird Island. You killed his father and his brother."

"I know who you mean now," replied Jim, faintly.

The doctor approached.

"If you wish to make any statement," he exclaimed, "or have any friends to send to, or desire to put your worldly affairs in order, now is the time to do it."

"Shall I die?" inquired the wounded man.

"It is my painful duty to inform you that you cannot live half an hour."

"So soon to die?"

"Yes."

There was an awful silence for nearly a minute.

"Doctor," said Binnacle Jim, breaking the oppressive silence, "you see that boy?"

"I do."

"I have robbed him. In my pocket is my bank-book, and it represents a heap of money, all of which is his. There may be some law trouble if I don't sign it over to him, so just draw up a short legal paper."

The doctor nodded his head in token of assent.

"I understand," he replied.

First he asked Jim's name, then Spider's, and drew up the following document:

"I, James Flannigan, do make this my last will and testament, and in it I bequeath to Harry Martin all the property, real and personal, of which I die possessed."

It was duly signed and witnessed.

"Spider," said the dying man.

"I am here," replied Spider.

"You'll take care of the old woman?"

"She is where she will require no care, Jim," said Spider.

"Dead, is she?"

"So I heard."

"My God! and I have killed my mother! Hell yawns for me! I'm gone!" gasped the wretch.

A rush of blood checked his further utterance, and his lips were stained with a purple froth.

He never spoke again.

In half an hour he was dead, and the doctor, who had taken an interest in Spider, gave bail for his appearance as a witness at the inquest, and took him home with him.

Spider told him his history.

"Doctor," he concluded, "I'm going to be rich again, but I'm tired of being my own boss."

"You are?"

"Yes, sir. It's all a mistake to be a boy boss. I can't manage my own affairs. I have no friends in the world except Cris and his daughter. Will you be my guardian?"

"I will," replied the doctor.

* * * * * * *

Spider never had occasion to regret his choice of a guardian, for Doctor Palmer was honest, intelligent and kind.

He sent him to college and gave him a good education.

When he grew up he married Edie, whose father died a short time afterward.

Spider went West and bought an immense farm, becoming the largest grain-raiser and stock-merchant in Illinois.

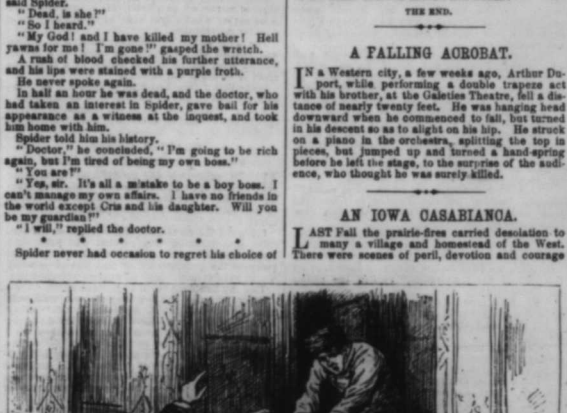
His right-hand man was Stump, who worked for him with an interest in the farm.

They are known as Mr. Martin and Mr. Green, but the old names are not forgotten.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin have been blessed with two children, both boys, and they are familiarly known in the home circle as SPIDER AND STUMP.

THE END.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.—"THE REPORT OF A RIFLE RANG THROUGH THE ROOM; MY SHOULDER FELT AS IF TOUCHED BY A RED-HOT IRON."—SEE PAGE 71.



BLOWN OFF A CAR-PLATFORM.—A STUDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE BLOWN FROM A CAR-PLATFORM AND DASHED TO DEATH DURING A FURIOUS GALE OF WIND.

A FALLING ACROBAT.

IN a Western city, a few weeks ago, Arthur Dupport, while performing a double trapeze act with his brother, at the Gaieties Theatre, fell a distance of nearly twenty feet. He was hanging head downward when he commenced to fall, but turned in his descent so as to alight on his hip. He struck on a piano in the orchestra, splitting the top in pieces, but jumped up and turned a hand-spring before he left the stage, to the surprise of the audience, who thought he was surely killed.

AN IOWA CASABIANCA.

LAST Fall the prairie-fires carried desolation to many a village and homestead of the West. There were scenes of peril, devotion and courage which will long be remembered. Frank Aiken, the Casabianca of Grant Township, Iowa, will ever live in the annals of heroic boyhood.

One Sunday a fire broke out in that district, and, though checked at first, soon burst out with redoubled fury, a high wind driving on the flames with incalculable fury.

About one o'clock it had reached Grant township, and was coming at a furious speed toward the premises of Mr. B. F. Aiken, whose oldest child, a lad of fifteen, immediately mounted a horse and galloped out into the field to try and save his father's hay, which was in imminent danger.

The boy let the horse go and took the blanket upon which he rode and wet it in the creek and thought to put the fire out while it was crossing. When the fire neared him it was so hot that he could not stand it, and started to run at one side, with the hope of getting out of the way of the main head-fire, but he soon saw that he could not get out of its way and knew that he must face the worst.

With great presence of mind the brave little fellow wrapped the wet blanket around his head and shoulders, and turned and ran with all his might through the fire. It was but the work of a moment and his doom was sealed. When he reached the burned region the blanket dropped from him in pieces, and with his nailless and almost fingerless hands he tore the remainder of his burning clothing from his body, except his shoes, which were crisp tight to his feet, and there he stood, naked and scorched from head to foot, suffering untold agonies.

His father, who was a short distance away, saw the fire as it passed over his son. He ran his horse through the side-fire, and was soon at his boy's side.

"Frank, are you badly burned?" asked Mr. Aiken.

"No, father; but let's hurry home," was the reply.

Mr. Aiken lifted the poor fellow upon the horse and started to lead it home, and holding on to the boy with one hand lest he might fall. They had proceeded in this manner but a few steps when the suffering boy said:

"Oh, father, let me have the reins—I can't stand to go so slow."

The father yielded, and Frank ran the horse at full speed to the house, dismounted, tied the horse and went into the house without assistance. A neighbor immediately went to town for Drs. Robinson and Walker, and in the meantime the almost distracted parents were bathing him with tallow, which seemed the only thing to afford ease. The doctors did all in their power to restore the suffering boy, but all was in vain. He died without a struggle at two the next morning. He was burned internally, which caused his death so suddenly. His limbs up to his knees and elbows were so badly burned that the blood had ceased to circulate in them, and they were cold and dead long before the patient ceased to breathe. His father, who stood by his bedside until life had fled, frequently asked him to have courage, and the brave little fellow would reply:

"Yes, father, I've got courage, and think I will stand it all right."

Frank was a very smart boy for his age, and was highly esteemed by the neighbors and all who knew him. He was always very kind and obedient to his parents. The entire community sympathize with the bereaved family in this great misfortune.

THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE.

MANY amusing stories are told of the imitative faculty of monkeys, but imitances of dogs thus copying the feats and tricks of their human masters are not so plentiful. Nevertheless, dogs that have been well trained sometimes afford much interest and amusement by their antics. The illustration shows an instance of the force of example upon a dog which had been trained to perform in a circus, but had afterward come into the possession of a boy who was very fond of coasting. The boy had been out with his sled and his dog, and momentarily leaving his sled, what was his surprise when he returned to find the intelligent and imitative animal standing erect on the sled, speeding down the hill, evidently enjoying the fun as well as his young master!

BLOWN OFF A CAR PLATFORM.

AMONG the passengers who boarded the afternoon express-train from New York for Baltimore, at Princeton, N. J., a few days ago, were three students of Princeton College, who intended to spend Sunday with their parents at Wilmington, Del. They occupied a car near the front of the train, and remained in that compartment until the cars reached a point near Linwood, between Chester and Wilmington. Here one of the young men proposed that they should go back to the next car behind, and all three went up toward the door. The wind was blowing furiously, and the student who was leading barely escaped being blown from the cars in his passage across the platform. As it was, he lost his hat, and had to hold on to the brake-wheel for bare life.

Young Vaughan, a member of the Junior Class, and a son of Doctor Vaughan, a prominent physician of Wilmington, Del., was close behind him. The moment he reached the platform the wind swept with increased fury over the track toward the Delaware. His overcoat was blown open, and he staggered backward. As the gusts filled the garment he attempted to grab the brake, but failing in the attempt, was blown off the platform. His cry, as he disappeared in the darkness, served as a warning to the student following, who hastily drew back and gave the alarm. But there was great confusion, and four miles must have been traversed by the express before the conductor was apprised of the disaster. Several of the passengers urged him to return, but he refused. He proposed, as a better and safer plan, to run rapidly to Wilmington, and then send a dispatch to Linwood, asking that a hand-car be sent out to look for the missing man. This course was adopted, and when the express-train reached Perryville a telegram was found, informing those on board that the body of young Vaughan had been found near the spot where he had been blown from the platform.

Owing to the velocity with which the train was going over the level stretch near Linwood, it is surmised that Vaughan's death must have been instantaneous. He was about twenty-five years of age.

THE best recipe for going through life in an exquisite way, with beautiful manners, is to feel that everybody, no matter how rich or poor, needs all the kindness he can get from others in the world.

DASHING DOLORES;

Or,

Chincapin Dick on the Border.

By JOSEPH E. BADGER, Jr.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON TO THEIR FATE.

"PACK and run for it!" screamed Chincapin Dick, grasping the bit of the black stallion and forcing it to wheel with them. "Give 'em a little lead as a hint to keep thar distance. Shoot low, an' you'll ketch either man or critter!"

His instructions were promptly obeyed, and as they rapidly retreated down the rocky defile, the two men sent back a perfect hallstorm of bullets from their magazine rifles, and not entirely without effect, judging from the wild outcry coming from the hidden enemy.

After that first hasty volley, no shots were fired by the Border Vultures, for Black Panther, recognizing the voice of Dashing Dolores, fiercely ordered his men to hold their fire, lest their bullets should slay her rather than the audacious Texans.

Only for this, it may be doubted whether either of our three friends would have escaped from that narrow defile alive.

Though there was not light enough to admit of anything like a certain aim, a bullet glancing from the smooth rock-walls would kill or disable quite as surely as though sent straight home from the muzzle. Hence, though indirectly, they again owed their lives to the presence of the fair amazon, Dashing Dolores.

A very short time sufficed to carry them to the mouth of the pass, and then, for the first time since the ambush was sprung, they began to breathe freely again.

"Better turn up the other hollow, hadn't we?" suggested Little Jack.

"No—straight ahead," hastily responded Chincapin Dick. "I'll explain as we ride."

During those few moments his brain had been busily occupied, and he now divulged the fruits thereof bit by bit, as clearly as the rough riding would permit.

They were plainly followed by Black Panther and his outlaws, who would have a double incentive—revenge and a desire to rescue their captive mistress.

They were still close enough to "run by ear," and were the fugitives to attempt the second pass, they would instantly follow, if they did not divide and send one portion of their force through the other defile to intercept the fugitives.

It was equally certain that the Mexican soldiers had heard the sounds of the firing; indeed, that was one of the reasons why Chincapin Dick had bidden his friends use their weapons so freely. Naturally they would connect this firing with the escaped prisoners, and, feeling confident in their numbers, they would press on toward the scene at full speed.

"We'll watch for the right nick o' time an' slip aside, leavin' only a couple to bring up the quickest an' surest way o' gittin' shet of 'em both," he concluded.

The plan was a daring one, but it appeared to be quite feasible, and in the absence of any more practicable idea, it was acted upon without a dissenting voice.

During this time Dashing Dolores had remained strangely quiet, when she might possibly have effected her escape, had she chosen to be retractory. But not a sound had left her lips after that one outcry, and she rode along beside the young ranchero, seemingly resigned to whatever fate might be in store for her.

Chincapin Dick kept close to her side, holding himself in readiness to frustrate any attempt at escape, for he fully realized her value as a hostage until they should be fairly beyond the reach of Black Panther; but, as already stated, Dashing Dolores gave him no trouble whatever, greatly to his surprise and gratification.

"We've got to cut off pesky soon, unless we want to ride chuck up into the arms o' them pizen Greasers," said Huckleberry, a few minutes later.

"Ride on to them shadders, then turn to the right, an' walk your critters."

It was indeed time for some such move, for the sounds of shod iron hoofs coming in contact with the flinty ground could be distinctly heard from in front as well as rear, and one minute more of steady advance would bring about a collision.

The spot chosen was an especially favorable one for the purpose our friends had in view, being cast into dense shadow by a towering, tree-crowned cliff, the base of which was thickly strewn with sand.

Edging close to Huckleberry, who led the way, abruptly changed his course, passing around the rocky point, where their horses' hoofs gave back no echo, and covered by the friendly shadows, picked their way in a goodly circuit; intending to double and strike the back trail after the Border Vultures had passed by.

"I knowed it!" exclaimed Huckleberry, with a chuckle of grim delight, as a loud tumult arose from near the point where they had left the direct trail. "The pizen imps ben run control into each other's mouths! I only hope they'll keep a-chawin' ontel the pizen last one on 'em is eternally wiped out for ever, amen!"

It was, indeed, a case of "dog eat dog." The explosion of firearms, the clashing of steel, the loud yells and fierce curses, all betokened a desperate, bloody struggle between the rival forces.

Whether this collision was intentional, or through each party mistaking the other for those whom they were pursuing, we never be known, but it was especially fortunate for our friends.

They appeared to be wholly forgotten in the stubborn contest which ensued, and making the most of their golden opportunity, they regained the abandoned trail, and their defile, and shouting the right-hand pass, Huckleberry pressed on ahead of the rest, to make sure that the way was clear.

This pass proved considerably shorter than the other, but it was long enough for Chincapin Dick to make a very disagreeable discovery before the end was reached.

He was riding close beside Dashing Dolores, when she uttered a faint, gasping moan, and would have fallen from the saddle, only for the quick interposition of his arm.

An exclamation of surprise and horror parted his lips as he felt that her right side was wet with blood, the peculiar feeling of which he could not mistake. He knew that she must be severely wounded—perhaps dead, as she lay nerveless in his arms.

"Down, Jack, an' help me ease her to the ground," he cried, hastily. "Gently—though I'm powerful afeard the pore gal is dead—an' to think she never made a sound!"

"We got to rest a-fire; 'twon't do to let her bleed to death like a dog. You, Huck!"

At Little Jack's call Huckleberry hastily returned, and when he understood what had happened, he lost no time in collecting material for a fire, and starting it in a small niche in the wall, where the light would be partially hidden.

"You'd best 'tend to Ralone, Dick," he said, in a subdued tone, as though fearful of arousing the insensible maiden. "I don't reckon she'd like to wake up an' see us two rough-coons a-gwyplin' at her. We'll keep a lookout for enuz. If you need ary one on us, jest call out an' we'll come."

Tenderly Chincapin Dick bore the lifeless form to the fire, and with a reverent hand he gently laid bare the wound.

A rifle ball had passed through the fleshy part of her right shoulder, making a bad-looking, but by no means serious wound, since no bones were broken; and though the bleeding had been profuse, it was evident that no important artery had been severed, else the maiden would have succumbed long before she did.

Chincapin Dick possessed but a very superficial knowledge of surgery, although he had had some little experience with gunshot wounds, and would have given a good deal had the care and dressing of this wound fallen to the lot of almost any other person. Still, he did the best he could, with the limited means at his disposal, pressing little pads of lint into the orifices, and tearing up his shirt for bandages, finally adjusting the garments of his fair patient, and calling in his two friends.

"She ain't hurt so bad but what she'd easy pull through, ef she could only hev the right kind o' keer. Ef we was only sure some o' her frinds 'd come along this way, I'd be fer leavin' her here for them to 'tend to; but in the unsartinty we can't well do that—the wolves or buzzards mought find her out fust."

"A woman's a woman, a'ter all, when you come right down to the p'int," said Huckleberry, not without a twinge of regret as he remembered a recent speech of his. "We're boun' to stan' by her ontel we kin leave her in better han's. 'F you think she kin b'ar to be herried——"

"I believe there is no particklar danger. It was mostly the loss o' blood as made her fainty, like," quickly responded Chincapin Dick. "Any way, thar'd be less danger than in waitin' here. The most 'portant thing is to git her whar she kin be 'tended to reg'lar."

"Thar's the old Don's house——" then Huckleberry paused and bit his lip sharply.

But Chincapin Dick only laughed softly.

"You didn't think I'd forget my promise, old man? No, I'm bound to give the old man a chance of cuttin' my throat, ef so be he sticks out ter it, after the story I've got to tell him. I only thought that might be too long a ja'nt for her in her fix."

The friends had not been idle during this brief conversation. By the aid of what clothing they could, with decency, spare, a quite comfortable cushion was formed before Huckleberry, upon the pommel of the saddle and the withers of the black stallion, that animal being selected as the best able to carry double loads, and now Dick and Jack gently lifted the still unconscious maiden and placed her in the old man's arms.

They had not traveled far when Dashing Dolores regained her consciousness, and realized her situation. Huckleberry hastened to explain the necessity, but he need not have been so anxious; the expected and dreaded outburst did not come.

Whether it was that the Indian-like fortitude with which she had borne the pain and growing weakness consequent upon her wound had temporarily exhausted her fiery spirit, or that in losing the rich stake for which she had so boldly played she had become indifferent to all else, certain it is that she lay quietly in the old man's arms, asking no questions as to where they were taking her, and making no sign of pain.

But when the day fairly dawned she insisted upon resuming her own saddle and riding unassisted. Though unwillingly, our friends were obliged to let her have her own way, though Chincapin Dick rode close by her side, with ready hand and watchful eye.

His assistance was not needed, however, and only for her blood-stained jacket, no one would have guessed that Dashing Dolores had been injured, so uprightly did she carry herself in the saddle, betraying no signs of weakness or of pain.

"Another hour o' stiddy ridin' 'll kerry us thar, a'spoin' we don't run across any more pizen critters," exclaimed Huckleberry, after a long, searching gaze around them. "Crossin' over the river'll be the wust part of it all. Thar'll be sure to be some ornary Greasers around to give us trouble, seein' we can't neither run nur fight."

"Then your destination is Santa Rosa, señor?" inquired Dashing Dolores, turning to Chincapin Dick, and breaking the silence for the first time since resuming her saddle.

"To your—to Don Estevan de Gonzaga, rather. Your injury will require care and good nursing, which we were unable to give, and that was the only place we were sure of receiving assistance on this side of the Rio Grande," replied the young ranchero, quickly.

"You must promise me one thing: not to speak upon *that* subject until I give you leave."

"If you insist upon it——" hesitated Chincapin Dick.

"I do; and unless you promise what I ask I will go not a step further, unless you actually force me to do so as a prisoner," was the firm response.

"You need no longer fear such harsh measures, señorita," said Chincapin Dick, flushing hotly. "Then, it was absolutely necessary, if we would preserve our liberty, and so much besides was at stake, that we could not well act otherwise."

"I am not blaming you. You acted precisely as I should have done in your place, under the same circumstances. But you have not given the pledge I asked."

"I promise you not to speak unless you give me permission; but pray reflect well. Has *he* no rights which you are bound to respect?"

Dashing Dolores raised her hand with an impatient gesture, and yielding to her wishes, though far from being satisfied, Chincapin Dick bowed low and held his peace.

Huckleberry was not far out of the way in his estimate of the time it would take them to traverse the distance yet remaining between them and the Hacienda de Gonzaga.

Dame Fortune appeared to be tired of baffling them, for nothing occurred to retard their progress, and the ford was reached without their encountering a single human being.

Though several Mexicans were seen idly strolling about between the ford and the town, none of them cast a second glance after the little party, plainly having not the faintest suspicion as to who and what they really were.

"It's a savin' o' good powder 'an lead," quoth Huckleberry, as the crossing was effected in safety. "Though ef we was alone, I wouldn't ax no better fun than to——"

"Ride on ahead an' see of the trail is open," interposed Chincapin Dick. "You kin tell the Don who it is that's comin', an' he'll be willin' to let us in, I reckon."

Without a word the veteran cowboy obeyed, and reaching the heavy gates, he knocked so sturdily that Antoine came in fear and trembling, expecting to see his old enemy, Red Tom.

So great was his relief, that Huckleberry was most agreeably surprised at the warm welcome he received, little suspecting the actual cause of Antoine's cordiality.

By the time the remainder of the party came up, Don Estevan was awaiting them in person, grave and severe-looking, even beyond the common, but polite and courtly.

There was no need for Chincapin Dick to utter the excuse he had been framing so carefully.

As she drew rein, Dashing Dolores reeled in her saddle, and would have fallen, had not old Huckleberry sprang forward and received her in his arms.

"She's severely wounded, señor," he said, hurriedly; then, forgetting his Spanish: "Show me whar I kin put her—a bed or somethin'; don't be no pesky slow about it, nuther!"

There was really no necessity for this last adjuration, for Don Estevan divined the truth at a glance, and was already leading the way into the gloomy building.

Huckleberry deposited his fair burden upon a bed, and only left her when the old woman who had been nursing Don Luis entered the room and relieved him.

Meantime, Chincapin Dick and Little Jack were caring for their jaded horses, attended by old Antoine, who, with the garrulity so often accompanying old age, was not long in letting them into the secret of his master's unusual gravity.

Though Don Luis was no longer in danger of his life, and was rapidly regaining his strength, he would never be himself again. His eyesight had been irrecoably destroyed by the bottle which Little Jack had shivered in his face; he was blind for life.

Although the blow had not been undeserved—had even been invited by the insolent conduct of the youth—our two friends felt almost like criminals as they entered the room where Don Estevan and Huckleberry were awaiting them.

The Spaniard greeted them with a cold and stately politeness that in nowise tended to lessen this feeling, and Chincapin Dick drew a long breath of relief as the old cavalier said:

"You have not forgotten our engagement, I trust, señor? It still holds good, though the day on which it was to be decided has long since passed by."

"If you insist upon it, señor——" he began, only to be sharply interrupted.

"Insist is not the proper word between gentlemen, señor. I simply remind you of a promise made. There can be no possible question about your being ready and willing to redeem your word."

Little Jack would have interposed but Chincapin Dick quickly silenced him with a look.

"If you assume that position, señor, I can do no less than satisfy you, to the best of my ability. Still, you must allow me to repeat that I am totally ignorant of having given you cause for offense so serious that only blood can atone. But have your own way!"

"Antoine, bring wine and food. You must rest and eat, señor, after your long ride: for I warn you, without wishing to boast, that you will need your utmost strength and skill when you stand before me, weapon in hand. There will be no quarter either asked or given."

For the life of him Chincapin Dick could not help laughing aloud. Like a Christmas turkey, he was to be well fed before being killed.

Don Estevan appeared half inclined to take this burst of merriment as a deliberate affront, and there is no saying what might have happened only for a singular interruption.

The door was flung suddenly open, and a man was pushed violently into the room, only saving himself from falling at full length by a strenuous effort of strength and activity.

"The Señor Don Red Tom!" cried old Antoine, entering, and hastily closing the door behind him.

It was, indeed, the red-haired desperado, whom the old servant had so unceremoniously ushered in!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

EAGLES VERSUS VULTURES.

MIRTH, enjoyment and goodfellowship ruled the hour at the hospitable board of Big Tom Stanley that night, and the fun waxed fast and furious as the bottle was kept briskly moving around the table.

Little did the careless revelers dream of the horrible, soul-sickening tragedy that was even then being enacted, not quite five-and-twenty miles away, or the generous liquor that flowed so freely would have turned to gall upon their whitened lips.

The day had been spent in glorious sport.

Before the day dawned they had set forth with hound, horse and gun for a genuine Texan "turkey chase"—than which a more exciting, blood-stirring sport was never invented! At noon, they were just in the thick of an antelope chase. When the sun set they were just winding up a long and killing race after a couple of gray wolves. And now the cap-sheaf, in the guise of a plentiful supper and a hard drinking-bout, was being put upon a day of sport that would not soon be forgotten.

But the end was not yet, and still harder riding was to be done before the party broke up for good and all.

One of Big Tom's herders burst into the long room with a truly startling announcement.

"They's a powerful big blaze over Stevens's way!" he cried, without ceremony. "Tain't no common prairie fire, 'cause it don't spread out none——"

The end of the sentence was drowned by the clatter of glasses and dishes, and the rattling of overturned chairs and stools, as the revelers sprang to their feet.

"We're needed over yonder, boys!" cried Big Tom, as he took a steady look at the far-away light, that was steadily rising and increasing in brilliancy. "It's solid wood that makes that blaze, and Mad Ralph is in trouble. Who's for a ride, tail-on-end?"

There was but one answer.

The question was only a waste of breath. No earthly power could have hindered any one of those present from hastening to the rescue of their friend and neighbor.

Despite the liberal quantity of strong liquor he had drank, Big Tom was cool enough not to go off at half-cock.

He knew, from experience, that a few minutes judiciously spent at the beginning might be the saving of as many hours in the end, and by the exertion of his strong lungs he speedily brought order out of chaos.

All but himself and two men were sent to catch up fresh horses from the neighboring corrals and prepare them for the road. These two men he sent out to fetch certain of the hounds which had not been used that day, while he himself set out plenty of portable food, liquor and ammunition.

He saw that each man furnished himself with a filled flask, some provisions and plenty of powder and ball.

"Mebbe 'twon't be needed," he quoth, making a similar provision for himself. "Mebbe it's only a accidental fire 'mong Mad Ralph's corrals; but somethin' tells me thar is hot an' heavy work afore us—I kin feel it in my bones!"

"If it is the Greasers or redskinned devils this time, I, for one, swear never to let up until they've had a lesson they won't forget in a hurry!" declared John Brown.

This vow was warmly seconded, but there was little time wasted in idle speech.

The moment all was in readiness for the road—and all these preparations did not consume ten minutes—Big Tom gave the word, and, mounting, led the way over the fenced prairie, heading straight for the blood-red beacon.

The Texans rode with a free rein and bloody spur, but, although the five-and-twenty miles were covered in a trifle less than an hour and a half, they were too late to avert the tragedy.

The ranche was only a heap of glowing coals. The huge haystack was a blazing mass.

A choking, smothered scream came to their ears, and with a grating curse of horrified rage, Big Tom leaped his horse over the fenced almost into the fire, tumbled from the saddle, and with one sweep of his keen knife severed the bonds that held Mad Ralph to the torture-post.

Catching him up in his arms, he bore him away from the scorching heat, heedless of the fact of his own garments being on fire, until one of his friends smothered the flames.

Even his stout heart turned sick and faint as he stood over the quivering form of his friend, from which the roasted flesh was slowly peeling in flakes.

It did not seem possible that a man could have undergone so much and still live.

He had suffered not only from the fire, but from the merciless knife of Red Tom, though the latter was frightened away before his ferocious revenge was nearly satisfied.

So thoroughly was he wrapped up in his fiendish work, that he was almost caught by the rescuing party before he could gain his horse and flee for dear life. But, despite the dangerous proximity of his foes, he paused long enough to plunge his knife to the hilt in the bosom of his mutilated victim.

Mad Ralph opened his blinded eyes, and feebly raised one hand as though feeling for something.

Rightly interpreting the action, Big Tom knelt down beside him, bending his head low.

"I'm listenin', mate; better speak out while you kin. Who did all this?"

"Red Tom—the man that fooled you before-Greasers with him—dressed like Indians," painfully uttered the dying man. "They—carried off—Ina—save her—kill him——"

The husky voice died away in an inarticulate murmur, but he had said enough.

"I'll fetch her back, safe an' sound, of mortal man kin do it, mate," he uttered, earnestly. "We all on us say the same, an' pledge our honor to it. An' we'll hev a deep an' bitter revinge on the cowardly hell-hounds as did this black piece o' work, ef we hev to foller 'em clear to the gates o' hell itself! That's said an' sworn!"

Mad Ralph's fingers closed feebly upon Big Tom's hand, as though accepting the earnest pledge, but he did not speak. He was past that. His hands of life were run.

One convulsive shudder, then all was still.

Mad Ralph was dead!

"We hain't got the time nur the men to spar' to bury him," said Big Tom, arising, his voice sounding strained and unnatural. "We must think o' the livin' afore the dead. It's what he would 'a' said ef he'd 'a' bin axed. Come! le's git down to airnest work, boys!"

Now all realized the valuable forethought of Big Tom in bringing along the hounds. By their aid the trail could be followed as readily and rapidly through the night as by day, for this was not the first time they had been called upon to hunt game in human guise.

Big Tom stripped off his white shirt and tore it in two, binding the pieces around two of the hounds in such a manner as not to interfere with their motions, but marking them so they could be readily followed through the gloom in case the moonlight should fail them, owing to the gathering clouds.

The hounds struck upon the trail, and went off at a rattling gait, the horsemen following closely upon their heels, riding now in utter silence. The horrible scene they had just left indisposed them to speak. They dare not trust themselves to utter what they felt.

Not for after hour they rode on, not a word being spoken, save when Big Tom encouraged the faithful hounds to renewed speed.

Then, just as the gray light in the east told of the coming day, they abruptly drew rein, the hot blood tingling in every vein, as the faint reports of firearms came to their ears from straight ahead, though still far away.

With a wild cheer Big Tom dashed his bloody spurs into the bleeding flanks of his jaded horse and thundered on—to what?

* * * * * *

"Beg pardon for disturbing you, captain, but Tierney thinks there's work out for us—a pegan in the case, too, if he ain't mistaken."

The last clause was cunningly chosen. Nothing less would have reconciled Captain Brown to having his sleep broken, after such a long and hard day's scouting; but at the magic name of pegan the gallant son of Mars sprang to his feet, wide awake and ready for work.

Tierney, one of the scouts and hunters of the squad, was summoned, and told his own story.

In accordance with his usual custom while upon the scout, he had taken up his position some little distance apart from the soldiers. Though not detailed for guard duty, he had, a few minutes before, discovered a small party of what he believed were Indian raiders, crossing the prairie swell, not more than a quarter of a mile beyond his position.

He only saw them for a few moments, by the dim light of the moon, and could not speak positively as to their numbers. There were some led horses, and one of the party bore something white upon the saddle before him, which he felt positive was a human being.

"Tain't noways likely he'd be so keerful of a man critter," sagely added the scout.

Captain Brown's decision was quickly taken, and while his men were preparing their animals for the route, he sent Tierney and his brother-scout ahead to strike the trail.

This was sufficiently plain for such experienced hands to lift at a dog-trot, even by that dim and uncertain light, and the boys in blue followed close upon their heels, the prospect of a brush with the enemy fully reconciling them to their broken rest.

Their ride was not a long one, the scouts calling a halt before three miles had been covered.

"I'm imps hev cached in the swamp over yender, I reckon, cap," said Tierney, in explanation. "We ketched a glimp' of a fire just now. It's a tickly place to get at, an' ef we startle the critters too soon, we'll hev a hot and hard hunt for 'em, ef they don't give us the slip altogether. Reckon mate 'nd me'd better go on ahead, an' smell out jest how the land lays. You kin wait here for our report—"

"I'll go with you!" quietly interposed Brown, dismounting and removing his sabre.

Neither of the scouts was particularly pleased with this decision, but they knew the captain too well to raise any objection, and silently led the way.

Brown only paused to give his men a few brief directions, then followed after.

Tierney was right when he said that the retreat was an awkward one to get at, as Captain Brown soon discovered. It may be that there was a spice of mischievous spite in the affair, for the scouts seemed to pick out the worst route they could find, preferring through tangled thickets of thorns and vines, wading through mud and water that reached above their knees, and at times creeping upon their stomachs through wet, miry places.

Brown faithfully imitated their every movement, and if he suspected the truth, he gave no sign of the fact. Whatever he undertook he went through with.

Half an hour of this kind of work carried them to where they could look out upon the dismal camp of the enemy, who plainly had no suspicion of their proximity.

As the reader has divined, it was the band of Border Vultures, pausing here to await the coming of their leader, Red Tom.

Ina Stevens, now in full possession of her senses, was seated near one of the two small fires, her head bowed, evidently utterly broken down by grief and despair.

The raiders were busily washing off the paint from their faces and bodies, preparatory to resuming their proper garments. Near them were tethered their horses, and seen under the flickering, uncertain light, the blood-stained corpses which still remained bound to their saddles, presented a weird, gruesome sight, which caused even the iron-nerved scouts to feel uncomfortable.

There could be no doubt as to what the party was when the prisoner, the disguises, the dead bodies, and the extra horses were taken into consideration, and Brown, in a cautious whisper, bade the two scouts return to the soldiers and bring them up.

"Divide, and lead the boys up on two sides. When you are ready yelp like a wolf, and I will make that fat horse-thief a present to a lady. You will close in, and take them all prisoners. Don't burn powder unless I give the word. Such a death would be too good for such devilish scoundrels. Go, and make what haste you can, without alarming the enemy."

Without a word the two scouts turned and stole silently away to execute the orders received.

Brown lay in his uncomfortable ambush, with revolver drawn and cocked, ready to leap forward, single-handed, in case any serious insult was offered the dejected captive.

Greatly as he desired to effect the capture of the raiders, he felt that the honor of a woman was to be considered before all else.

Luckily, he was not obliged to resort to such extreme measures.

Lawless though the Border Vultures were, they respected the prize of their temporary leader, and did not even cast a covetous glance toward Ina. Probably they fancied it would not prove healthy when Red Tom came to hear of it.

The captain was not obliged to wait long, for even before he expected it the lugubrious howl of a wolf broke upon the night, and was answered from a point nearly opposite.

The two scouts had lost no time in bringing the soldiers into position.

Without a moment's hesitation Captain Brown broke cover, darting forward and standing before the fair captive, threatening the astounded outlaws with a leveled revolver in each hand.

"Stir one step, or attempt to touch a weapon, and you are dead men!" he thundered, speaking in Spanish. "You are surrounded and outnumbered. Surrender, or you die like dogs!"

The two scouts advanced with their forces, spreading out to guard against any attempt at escape, their leveled carbines covering the bewildered raiders, threatening them with instant death.

Desperate villains though they were, they were not foolhardy enough to court certain death, and suffered themselves to be disarmed and bound.

Such was the picture that Red Tom gazed upon as he neared the retreat.

Half-mad at finding himself thus cheated out of the cream of his revenge, Red Tom drew his revolvers and opened on the soldiers, only retreating when his weapons were empty and he was almost cut off by the two scouts.

This was the firing that the Texans, under Big Tom, had heard.

Pursuit was made, but finding the outlaw had the heels of them—thanks to his noble Swiftfoot—was not long maintained.

There were four more dead bodies carried out of the swamp than entered it.

If he had taken revenge for his disappointment, Red Tom had not bettered the chances of his allies. Now, if not before, their fate was sealed beyond redemption.

Just as the party fairly cleared the swamp they were met by Big Tom and his men.

Fortunately, it was now light enough for them to recognize each other as friends, and the two forces were soon mingled inextricably.

Big Tom's first care was for Ina, toward whom he felt like a father, and though the trial was a painful one to them both, he at length succeeded in composing her wild grief, at least outwardly.

As soon as he could leave her for a moment he joined Captain Brown and made a formal demand that the prisoners should be surrendered to his care, briefly detailing the horrible crimes they had committed, in justification of his somewhat unusual course of action.

"They've got to die," he added. "Justice demands that punishment, an' though you 'nd me are good fri'nds now, ef you stan' up for them, you're got to lick the crowd—so thar!"

"They're scarcely worth our cutting each other's throats for," laughed Brown, failing into the other's humor. "I did intend to shoot them in revenge for my poor boys, but if you think you can do them better justice, you are welcome to try your hand at it."

"Shootin' is too good for 'em. Roastin' would serve 'em better, but a white man don't like to copy after such pizen surpints. They've got to hang," quoth Big Tom.

"You'll have a long ride to find a suitable tree," laughed the captain.

"We kin do without a tree—they's more ways then one to skin a cat. Boys! come an' draw lots to see who shall have the honor o' givin' these devils a prairie hangin'!"

The Texans eagerly crowded around their leader, and the lots were prepared as soon as possible, Big Tom reserving one chance for himself. The lucky five—for lucky they considered themselves—lost no time in carrying out the terrible punishment.

Big Tom set the example, fitting the noose of his lasso neatly around the neck of Pietro, then clapping spurs to his horse and galloping away over the prairie at full speed, the body of the luckless Vulture dragging at his heels, until bruised and battered out of all semblance to humanity.

One by one the wretched prisoners met a like fate, receiving no mercy, even as they had shown none. The punishment was barbarous in the extreme, but their crimes had been even more so, and no one could pity their fate.

Their remains were left where they lay, for the prairie scavengers to batten on.

(To be continued.)

"Dashing Dolores" was commenced in No. 688.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

An Incident in the Life of a Railroad Paymaster.

By H. D. SMITH, U. S. R. M.

"IT will be at least an hour before the mail express is due, gentlemen, and it will scarcely be prudent to court the favors of the drowsy god for that short space of time. The storm rages without, the fire burns briskly within doors, the landlord's whisky is good, and, if you desire, I will relate an incident connected with my career while paymaster on the Pacific Railroad."

There were five passengers of us who remained over at an obscure station in Vermont, one dreary, stormy night in November, all anxious, through various causes, to push on to our several destinations. The small hotel adjoining the depot was thankfully made use of. The fire roared zealously in the huge fireplace, and as we gathered within the cheerful influence of the blaze, with sundry glasses of steaming-hot toddy, the proposition of our fellow-traveler was hailed with a unanimous chorus of approval.

"Gentlemen," and the narrathr demolished a generous allowance of toddy before venturing further, "I am the ex of a paymaster on a railroad, especially one that is in course of construction, presents anything but pleasing prospects to him who stands guard over the strong iron box and handles the crisp greenbacks intrusted to his charge by the company.

"A road of the magnitude of the Pacific must necessarily push its way through vast tracts but sparsely settled, and, bordering on the furtherest limits of civilization, it is not more than to be expected that desperate, reckless men are to be met with at every turn, and low saloons and gambling-hells, which invariably spring up, as if by magic, at the end of a section where hundreds of workingmen necessarily have their quarters, drive a thriving business.

"Then, again, the laborers themselves are composed largely of the lowest and most ignorant type, difficult to please, never satisfied, ready to make a quarrel with the time-clerk upon the slightest pretext. I must say they are anything but a pleasant set to deal with.

"It is unnecessary to mention, gentlemen, that I invariably went armed; and now, having given you an idea of the men I had to deal with, I will proceed with the details of my story.

"A little more punch, please—and I would have given a considerable to have had some of the same brew on the eventful evening I am telling you about.

"I had reached Omaha, on a route-car attached to a special engine and tender for the purpose of paying off the attachés and workmen, who were in arrears to quite an amount.

"The news of my arrival had been noised about, so that when the locomotive stopped with a jerk alongside the platform I found myself beheld by a crowd of sunburnt, brawny, bewhiskered and begrimed faces, anxiously looking for the paymaster. I noted the expressions on some of the men's faces. It was enough to make one's blood run cold. Such devilry, such depravity and reflection of evil passions, I never beheld before so vividly pictured in the human countenance divine.

"As I stepped on to the platform, my servant, bearing the iron box, which, by-the-way, contained eighty thousand dollars, a yell, a horrible shout of welcome, ascended from the assembled crowd.

"I must confess, gentlemen, that my nerves were shaken, why, is more than I can say, for I can scarcely be called a timid man. I gained the rank of lieutenant during the war, and two brevets during the war, starting out with a musket. But that is neither here nor there.

"I looked about me on all sides for a building, a hotel or accommodations of some kind, where I would be safe with my treasure the sheet-iron doors bore the ominous word 'Saloon' over the door.

"I inquired for the superintendent of the section, and was informed that he lay in his tent, suffering from what was supposed to be an attack of small-pox.

"A pleasant situation for a man to be in, with night coming on, and surrounded by a gang of wolves.

"You ask me why I didn't remain in the car? For the simple reason that it had been put in requisition to convey the sick back to a place called Sand Ridge, where better accommodation awaited the poor fellows.

"My heart was finally set at rest in a most unexpected and agreeable manner.

"A tall, good-looking young fellow, dressed in a blue shirt, pants of the same hue tucked inside a pair of army boots, a belt containing a pair of Remingtons, and a face shaded by a broad-brimmed sombrero, approached me.

"With graceful ease he saluted me. His brown eyes fixed keenly on me the while, until the scrutiny became almost painful.

"'Excuse me, but is not your name Colonel Lane? Jim Lane, as the boys of the old Fourteenth dubbed you?'

"'The same,' I replied, extending my hand with a feeling of joy and relief I could not conceal.

"'And is it possible that Major Frank Hughes has changed so much that you do not recognize him?'

"Gentlemen, Frank was an old schoolmate of mine, a brother-soldier, and in less than ten minutes I was seated in his buggy, iron box, servant and all, and before the sun had dipped behind the long range of high-peaked hills in the west I was snugly ensconced in his best room.

"Frank had gone into stock-raising, his pretty young wife bravely accompanied him, while her sister—whose blue eyes, fair hair, soft complexion and lithe, Hebe-like form created an instantaneous impression upon my heart. She had consented to pass the Winter with her sister, leaving behind her the attractions and gayeties of Chicago.

"Her name was Elsie Ravenal; her sister was denominated by Frank as Madge.

"I was soon on the best of terms with the ladies, who seldom saw company. I exerted myself to please, gave all the latest news and gossip, to which the ladies were earnest listeners.

"Soon the shades of evening closed in, shutting out from view the surrounding objects.

"Frank quietly unchained a huge mastiff, whom he called Sailor, saying, as he allowed him to run free:

"'He is a splendid watch-dog—our sole protection at night—and no one can approach the house without our knowing it.'

"After the evening meal Frank and I lit our pipes, to have a quiet talk over old times—to fight afresh battles and skirmishes that had lain dormant for many a year in my mind.

"The ladies, in the meanwhile, had cleared the table, washed the dishes, cleared up generally, for they were none of your milk-and-water kind who shrank with horror from having their hands come in contact with dish-water.

"A piano was one of the evidences of taste and refinement which Frank had brought out for the benefit of his wife; and, as Elsie opened the instrument, a low growl from Sailor startled all present.

"A deep silence pervaded the room, but nothing was heard to excite apprehensions of alarm.

"Several brilliant instrumental pieces were performed, when Frank proposed a song; but a long, deep growl from the dog, followed by a scuffle and yelps, was sufficient to cause my companion to start to his feet and grasp a revolver.

"There is something wrong, colonel, sure. We had better take a look before we look up for the night.'

"We did take a look, reconnoitred the grounds, and found poor Sailor lying on the ground, his throat cut; but the perpetrator of the cowardly deed had vanished.

"The discovery cast a gloom over the little group; the ladies soon after retired, leaving us in unrestrained possession of the sitting-room in the front part of the house.

"The fire was burning brightly—my friend's whisky was uncommonly good—so we kept it up until quite late, going over the old ground from the time we first enlisted until the regiment was ordered home and disbanded.

"I had barely removed my coat, preparatory to going to bed, when a distant crash was heard, and a fearful noise, with shouts and screams, succeeded.

"I rushed from the room to the hallway, casting a glance at the iron box, which had been deposited by my bed, assuring myself that the funds intrusted to my care were safe.

"I at once, hurrying from his room, partially dressed, while behind him peered the blanched faces of his wife and her pretty sister, who certainly looked charming in the hasty toilet both had made.

"'The house is attacked!' exclaimed Frank, as he hurried down the back-stairs, closely followed by myself, 'and your strong box must be the attraction. I have never been troubled before. But you shall not lack protection,' and we halted on the threshold of the kitchen.

"Over the mantel were two heavy, double-barreled guns, which would form a powerful addition to our means of defense if once we gained possession of them.

"'Yonder is the point of attack,' whispered Frank, as he pointed to a tough oaken shutter, upon which the assailants were testing their strength.

"It was already splintered. There was no time to lose, and darting forward before Frank could detain me, I jumped upon a table before the fireplace, in which a bright log-fire was still burning.

"Grasping the two guns, I jumped to the floor, at the same time the rascals outside had chopped a small hole through the shutter.

"The report of a rifle rang through the room; my shoulder was grazed by a red-hot iron, and before the marksman could repeat his attempt I was under cover.

"Scarcely had I reached it, however, when at least half a dozen bullets tore through the splintered shutter, which had so nobly resisted all efforts to force it from its position.

"A scream from one of the ladies apprised us of some new danger, at the same time a tremendous shock thundered through the house. An attack had been made upon the front-door, the assailants had divided their forces, which necessitated a like movement upon our part.

"My servant, I forgot to say, was a negro, but faithful and true, as he was calm and collected. Good service he performed that night reloading the firearms, and using them, too, when occasion demanded.

"Leaving Frank to defend the half-forced window, I hastened through the front hall, which was fortunately dark.

"An exultant yell burst from the desperadoes outside, as one of their number swung a tremendous sledge, before which the door was rapidly yielding. The man recklessly exposed himself, and in a voice which will ever remain in my memory:

"'Be ready, boys! Make a rush, and the money is ours!'

"They were the last words the scoundrel ever uttered. I took deliberate aim through the small side-window, pulled the trigger, the charge, a heavy one of buckshot, tore through the ruffian's body, and he dropped across the threshold without a groan.

"A yell of fearful import burst from the throats of the gang; bullet after bullet whistled through the door, but the enthusiasm of the scoundrels had received a damper.

"From a safe cover they summoned us to surrender, coupled with fearful denunciations of vengeance. We met their threats with words of bold defiance.

"A lull followed—an ominous silence—during which, while the scoundrels plotted fresh mischief, I found time to approach the ladies and express my regret that I should have been so unfortunate as to have been the cause of their terrible fright. Willingly would I have taken my departure, to have saved them further annoyance, suffering and danger—but it was too late.

"But the ladies would not listen to anything disparaging to Frank's guest, while Elsie, her blue eyes sparkling with excitement, hoped I would teach them such a lesson that they would never forget.

"A shot from an adjoining room cut short the conversation, as I hurried to ascertain the cause.

"There stood my faithful servant, armed with one of my revolvers, peering through the window, which was partially open.

"Under cover of the darkness one of the more determined of the gang had crept forward with an armful of dry grass, with the intention of setting fire to the building, but thanks to Sciplo's sharp eyes the plan was frustrated.

"It was about the last effort the rascals made. They contented themselves by indulging in the most fearful threats, keeping fine care, however, to remain under cover.

"They offered to depart for a modest consideration of five thousand dollars, which I bade them to come forward and claim, but no one stirred.

"We kept watch until daylight, when Frank and myself sallied forth. The gang had disappeared, leaving their two comrades behind them as they had fallen.

"In trying to remove them I discovered that my left arm was useless. A hasty examination proved that I had received a wound, not dangerous but painful. An army surgeon from the nearest post dressed the gash, while a file of soldiers were posted about the house, but we were not troubled again.

"I was delayed some time at Frank's house, where I was tenderly nursed by Elsie, who in due time I asked to be my wife. She did not say nay—but there is the whistle of the mail-express, gentlemen, so I will refresh myself with one more nip of the toddy before wishing you farewell."

INVENTIVE BEN;

Or,

How a Boy Became a Jack-of-all-Trades and Master, Too.

By COMMODORE AH-LOK.

CHAPTER XXII.

BEN'S ARTFUL DODGE.

AFTER going some little distance away from the canal, Captain Sherman halted and thought:

"I am an old coward to quit that brave boy! No! I'll return, and, come what may, will remain with him!" whereupon he retraced his steps, and was presently back to the spot from whence he had started, when, noticing him, Ben said, in a low tone:

"Cap, for goodness sake, go. If you don't, you'll spoil all!"

"I'm no cur who deserts his friend in the hour of need," was the old fellow's quiet response. "This is going to be a black night for you, Thatcher, but I mean to share the risk."

"Foundation!" ejaculated the lad, "still you go!" adding, as he jumped on shore: "Schsch!"

"I shall not leave you, and that is flat!" whispered the cripple. "I started off without thinking of the results to you; now you go with me or I shall remain. Those mule-drivers will destroy the machine, and perhaps kill us; moreover, you never he said that I was afraid, or left you to your fate."

"See here, partner," breathed Ben, "I understand what you mean, and appreciate it; but if you stay you will bust all my plans. Now do oblige me by going to my uncle's. If you remain you'll ruin everything. This is business, and you know you never were a good hand at that! Don't worry about me. In two hours I'll join you at my folks'. You can say I stepped behind to clean up. Come, hurry off, pard; it's growing mighty dark, and I sha'n't have any too much time before Briggs and his crowd arrive. I can fix them, never fear!"

It was some moments ere Sherman would consent; however, he finally yielded, and as soon as the old fellow vanished in the gloaming Ben cast off the mooring-lines and started for a turn-out about a mile up-stream, where he knew Briggs kept a boat not unlike the one hired by the inventors.

By the fast decreasing light Thatcher made out that the craft was there, so, backing out, he proceeded to transfer his flag and deck-seats to the other vessel; having accomplished which, he towed it down to the bend, and moored it where his own had been, then quietly set ahead again, reentered the turn-out, and, securing his bow-line, stepped on shore.

As he groped his way for a fence that he knew ran in the direction of the main road, he heard the same signal as the one given by Billy Saunders.

It was London, who had been sent ahead in order to ascertain whether the inventors had remained on board their boat.

"Whistle *again*, you chuckle-head!" thought Ben, moving cautiously from one field to another. "You thing you're a wild smart, don't you?" whereupon he jumped a ditch, all, gaining the highway, started for Scrub Oak.

Leaving him to make the best of his way homeward, we will take a peep at Joe Briggs and his friend Noggs, who were cautiously rowing upstream in a dug-out.

"There's the cuss's boat!" murmured London, as they made out his father's craft in the bend, and paddled silently toward it.

"If we've a foot ahead, while I stand up and feel if there's any chairs on the deck," breathed Noggs.

Joe did as he was ordered, while the smith, rising in the stern of their frail craft, fumbled along the rim of the boat until his hand touched a seat, after which they dropped astern, and, having assured that there was a flag hoisted on the staff, turned and rowed swiftly down to Briggs's wharf.

Quitting the dug-out, they entered a shed filled with men, who were silently smoking and awaiting their return, and who, on seeing them, rose in a body, as though ready to start.

"Are they aboard?" demanded London's father.

"No," was Noggs's reply. "They have, no doubt, gone to Scrub Oak with the Wilkinses."

"So much the better for them!" was the first speaker's observation. "We don't want blood, but won't have any motors on this canal—eh' boys!"

"Not much!" growled the others, as each of them gathered up an armful of brushwood and tarred fagots, and donned a cotton mask. "We'll back you, boss."

"There is no fear of any boats coming down canal to-night, eh?" queried Noggs. "It would be a bad job if we set any others on fire!"

INVENTIVE BEN.—"'WHAT'S YOUR NAME, MISTER?' 'SLY SAMMY, FROM LIVERPOOL,' ANSWERED THE MAN. 'WHAT'S YOURS YOU GREENHORN?' 'INVENTIVE BEN,' WAS OUR YOUNG FRIEND'S ANSWER."—SEE PAGE 71.

"I've fixed that," said Briggs, with a significant laugh. "All the drivers have struck between this and Lower Princetown." Then, addressing his son, he whispered, "Got the matches, Joe?"

"Ye-s," grinned London. "Let me set a light to the boat, pa?"

"All right," growled the man, adding, as he turned to the conspirators: "Now, brothers, it ain't the boy and man we're after as much as their d u r n e d motor. They're gone, and will not trouble us, and once we destroy their machine, will be afraid to make another. Each of you advance and pitch your load on to the deck of the boat, after which hide until assistance arrives, for they will rattle out the engines; then help the firemen by cutting the hoses."

"All right," once more responded the drivers, and in another moment the procession started, Noggs and London returning to the dug-out, and again rowing toward the doomed craft.

Silent as spirits glided the men, who, believing they were doing their best to save themselves and families from starvation, were not so much to blame as their leaders, and as the town-hall clock loomed out nine times they neared the object of destruction, Briggs being in high glee and scarcely able to contain his delight, for, in spite of what he had said, he hated Ben, and was very sorry not to have an opportunity of being personally revenged upon him for winning his sixty dollars.

Noggs and London were ahead, and as the mob noiselessly landed, the boy said, in a feigned voice:

"Here is the derned boat; chuck on the kindling!"

When the stuff was rapidly deposited, and, after the deck was heaped like a bonfire, he set it ablaze.

Up sprang a tongue of fire, and away darted the conspirators; Briggs entering the dug-out, which was rowed along the stream that ran under the old forge, and assisting Noggs to propel the light craft at a tremendous speed.

In a few moments they were in the smithy, while the drivers, who had retreated in all directions, waited to hear the fire-bell sound.

"I vote we quit this and go down to the post-office," suggested Noggs. "We shall then have lots of witnesses to prove we were not near the cuss's boat."

"Good idea," said Briggs, and away they went, emerging from the building by a side-door.

As yet no sign of the conflagration was to be seen, though they knew it was burning, the materials being all as inflammable as art could make them.

"Strange there's no sign yet," murmured Noggs, when they halted at their rendezvous.

"Yes," said Briggs; "I hope it's all right."

Upon which some one at his elbow remarked, in a pleasant voice:

"Good-evening, mister."

It was Inventive Ben.

"Good-evening," growled the man, in reply, and all of an instant a lurid glow illuminated the eastern sky; noticing which, Noggs exclaimed:

"It's burning!"

"*What* is?" demanded Thatcher.

"Something up the canal!" was the other's surly answer; then, being a fireman, he started home for his hat.

"Fire!" yelled London, darting off; "f-a-r!"

"Fire!" shouted Briggs. "Boy, I shouldn't wonder if it ain't your boat. Come along."

With a grin of delight Thatcher followed the man, and a fast-gathering crowd, out to the bend, where by that time, the craft was burning furiously.

On came the engines, and soon they were pumping upon the fiery mass, when the mule-drivers and Briggs slyly pricked the hose and rendered the machines almost useless.

While the flames were towering aloft, like a pillar of fire, London shouted to Ben, who was calmly surveying the work of destruction:

"Hello, *smarty!* how much will you take for your old motor now, eh?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CHANGE IN HIS PLANS.

INVENTIVE BEN was the most unconcerned individual among the excited crowd that had gathered to witness the scene, and as London ended his taunting speech he replied:

"What will I take for our motor? Why, a hundred thousand dollars!" adding, "you're the smarty, not I."

"Oh, nephew!" said his aunt, as she and her husband arrived on the bank, "this is dreadful!" While Captain Sherman, who accompanied them, ruefully gazed upon the blazing mass and ejaculated:

"We're ruined! All his smartness hasn't saved it."

"Your loss don't seem to worry you much," tauntingly remarked Noggs to his former pupil. "Guess you're well insured?"

"Nary a cent," dryly answered the boy. "Why in thunder should I git mad? The boat wasn't mine!"

"How!" fairly yelled Briggs, who was near by. "Have we made a mistake?"

"I ray-ther calculate you have," was the calm response. "I heard you intended to burn our invention, so took measures to save it;" adding, with a broad grin: "You've been too smart ag'in, my friend, and have bitten off your nose to spite your face."

"Eh!" roared the puzzled man. "What are you giving me?"

While he was speaking one of the drivers came running along the tow-path from the turn-out, and, on seeing Briggs, halted, saying, in a hoarse voice:

"Boss, I want you!" on which the mule-owner quitted Thatcher and joined the new arrival, the pair vanishing among the crowd, and moving off together in the direction of the inventor's craft.

"Where's our boat, Benjamin?" nervously whispered Sherman.

"You wait, cap," was the lad's response. "I told you the mob didn't understand me;" then, noticing Fanny, who had just arrived on the scene, he walked toward her, leaving the old man wondering how his partner had fooled the conspirators.

"I'm sorry enough to see this, Ben," sobbed the girl. "They won't give you any reception, now your invention has been burnt up."

"Oh don't you take on, Fan," he said, winking as he spoke, "that's Briggs's boat they're burnt, not mine," with which he took her aside and related what he had done.

"They'll kill you," she murmured, in an agony of fear. "Ben, you and the captain had best go home at once. I've heard that Briggs has five hundred drivers at his back, and being desperate, they'll stick at nothing."

As she concluded her warning, a light blazed up from the turn-out, and the boy understood his danger. The motor boat was on fire.

His plan had failed. No lad can, single-handed, cope with a number of men; at least not in the way he tried to do it.

In vain Fanny urged him to retire. Budge he would not, and as folks turned and surveyed the new conflagration, he said, in a loud voice:

"That's our craft Briggs is burning now. Say, let's go and punish them!"

"Rah!" shouted the anti-Briggs faction, and away they went to capture the incendiaries—not that the villagers cared so much for Ben's loss as they did to have a chance to pay out the mule-owner; however, that was only human nature.

Sherman was by his partner's side, and Thatcher's uncle's was near him, so he was well supported, and as they reached the burning boat somebody handed the boy a stout stick, armed with which he felt ready for anything.

"Now, men!" hissed Briggs, who was white with anger at Ben's trick, "give it 'em!" when, advancing and uttering a wild yell, the mule-drivers sailed in. For a while the townspeople held their own, and Thatcher got in a couple of cracks on London's head that sent his enemy to grass; but soon their solid front was broken Uncle John was knocked out of time, and, after wavering for a few moments, the uninjured combatants turned and fled, leaving their wounded in the hands of the enemy.

In their rage the conquerors vented their spite upon the prisoners, and when they had severely beaten them, threw the poor fellows into a reedy swamp, and made off in various directions.

It was almost daylight when Ben came to his senses, and, on endeavoring to move, he discovered that he was beneath the body of his partner, who was still insensible.

The boy, though bruised and battered, was still full of courage, so he slowly worked out from under the captain, but on trying to rise, found his right limb was useless, which compelled him to lie still until assistance came.

Presently he heard a female voice, crying

"Ben, oh, Ben! Where be you, Ben? Oh, Ben!"

"Oh, Fan!" he answered; and in a few minutes, regardless of the mud, the girl was by his side.

"Are you much hurt?" she eagerly inquired, signaling to the searching party. "They wouldn't come out for you until they could see, and when I tried to find you in the dark, I was shot at!" saying which, she exhibited a wounded wrist.

"You're a right brave gal, Fan," he replied, after he was safely landed on the dry bank. "Jee! look to the captain and my uncle and the others. I'll do well enough."

In a short time the selectmen, Munson and a crowd of townsfolks arrived on the scene, and the injured boy and men were placed upon rude litters.

"Anybody killed?" tearfully asked Mrs. Wilkins, after ascertaining that her husband and nephew were alive.

"No," was the doctor's sleepy answer. "Ben's leg is hurt, and the captain's is smashed badly."

Hearing which Thatcher said, in his old-time, dry fashion:

"Never mind; pard's is only a wooden one!" then fainted, but recovered as they reached the entrance to the village.

"Hello Thatcher!" said Colonel Piper. "This procession is rather different from what you expected, eh?"

"Ye-s!" feebly responded the undaunted boy. "It isn't quite what I calculated on; but now I see that you have the boosing of the job, I ain't so much surprised at its meanness!" which retort made all present, save the committeemen, laugh.

A SNAKE-KILLING CAT.—AN ARIZONA CAT THAT CATCHES AND KILLS RATTLESNAKES.

"You ain't cast, then?" asked Padmore, who admired Ben's pluck.

"Not by a long way!" was the lad's answer; then he once more became insensible.

It was a week ere he got over the lever that followed, and when he did, he was observed by his aunt to gaze very earnestly at the splinters of the captain's wooden limb, which rested on a shelf in the room, while Sherman, who was rapidly recovering, was lying on a bed in the next apartment.

"Benjamin," gently inquired the old lady, "what are you looking at that for? It's smashed too bad for mending."

The boy's wan face was illuminated with a meaning smile as he quietly returned:

"Well, I was just thinking out an invention. Thatcher's patent steel limb," adding, with a wink, "if pard had been supplied with one he would have come off without a scratch on that part of his body."

"Ben," came a solemn voice from the other room, "I want you to sign a pledge."

"Total abstinence?" said the lad.

"Yes, from inventing," was the rejoinder. "We are both ruined, for we have no money with which to build a new model, and nobody will buy the mere patent. Now, join with me and swear you will never again attempt to make another machine."

"Not much, I won't!" was Ben's quick reply. "We will sell our rights in the motor, which will fetch us something, and end our partnership. But don't ask me to stop inventing. Why, I should die."

Within a month their entire interest in "Sherman & Thatcher's Non-wave Producing Propeller" was disposed of, and the amount divided between the man and boy, each receiving a thousand dollars.

"I'm going home to Germany," sadly observed the old captain. "Ah, Ben, be warned by me, and take to some good, steady trade. I've seen the error of my ways; fools invent, and wise men reap the profit."

For a moment the lad hesitated, then, shaking Sherman's hand, he drawled:

"I've got it? Wonder I never thought of it before. I'll try a trade, pard!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

FALLING AMONG THIEVES.

THE captain was delighted with the boy's resolve, and was most anxious to know what trade Ben had selected. However, the latter would not satisfy his curiosity, remarking:

"I am determined to keep my intention secret this time. When I first started out I told everybody what I meant to do, then did not accomplish it. Now I am wiser, and mean to imitate General Grant."

"You ain't going for a soldier, are you?" inquired Sherman.

"No," drawled Ben. "I'm going to hold my tongue."

And having sent to Mechanicsborough for his carpet-bag and stick, which were duly forwarded, he quickly prepared to quit home.

As Briggs had burnt his own boat, and there would have been great difficulty in proving that he set fire to the one hired by Sherman and Ben, he was not prosecuted, but popular indignation was very much excited against Noggs, who, finding the citizens meant to ride him on a rail, cleared out; besides which it was said the owners of the motor craft were repaid for their loss by a subscription raised among the mule-drivers.

One morning in July, Thatcher rose before his folks were about, and shouldering his luggage, started off, thinking to himself as he reached the top of the first hill:

"Guess I'll try the baking trade. I reckon the man who originates a thing seldom makes a big pile out of it, and great inventors sometimes die in the poor-house." Whereupon he chuckled, and nodding toward the village, added, aloud, "Good-by, once more. I'll try the *floury* road to fortune, but the day may yet come when your proudest boast is Bomb Dick will be—is this place was born and raised the illustrious inventor, Benjamin Thatcher."

Having said which, he winked farewell and started

for Frankerton, a manufacturing place, lying to the southwest of Pettyville Centre.

It was a long, warm, dusty tramp, and though the boy kept at it pretty steadily, he found by evening that he had only walked fifteen miles, while the road, being through a sandy, rocky, barren country, was destitute of human habitation, and therefore very lonely.

Hiding his bag in a clump of dwarf pine-trees, the weary traveler hunted round for a drink of water, but wandered some distance ere he discovered a spring, and even then would probably not have found it if he had not slipped in stepping upon some mossy stones, and landed in a sitting position among the short grass that concealed the rivulet from view.

Laughing at his mishap, for the back portion of his pants were soaked through, he rose, and tracing the stream to a clear spot, knelt, placed his mouth to the rill, and drank until he was satisfied, having done which he picked up his stick and returned to where he had left his personal property.

As he neared the spot he beheld a dirty-looking tramp, who, seated on the ground, was calmly engaged in examining the contents of Ben's bag, and at the same time was eating the boy's supper.

"Hello! what are you doing there?" angrily demanded Thatcher.

"Hello, mate!" coolly returned the fellow. "What cheer, eh? On the pad?"

"If you don't drop that I'll pad you!" cried Ben.

"There's my things!"

"It's like your cheek to say so." was the insolent rejoinder. "I found 'em, and am going to keep 'em!" whereupon he bolted the last morsel of food, selected the best suit from the garments before him, and ere the astonished looker-on had made up his mind what to do, rose and jogged off; when, recovering his usual senses, Ben rushed after him, and gave the fellow some awful licks with his stick, spite of which the tramp trotted on.

Finding that he made no more impression on him than a fly does on a cast-iron pump, the lad gave up the exercise, and was returning to the trees, when the highwayman shouted:

"How much will you pay me for these clothes? They won't fit me."

Not understanding the trap, which was to ascertain if he had any money, Ben answered:

"I'll give you two dollars."

"And won't lick me again!" whined the rascal, as though terribly afraid.

"No!" answered Thatcher. "You must be a mean cuss to rob a chap like me; however, I won't strike you. You and I will meet again some day, I reckon."

Back came the footpad, and as Ben was fumbling in his pockets for the money the robber snatched away his stick, and dealing him a terrific blow, knocked him sprawling; then, jumping upon his body, produced some cords and bound him hand and foot. Having done which, he searched him, secured his purse, and once more taking the suit of clothes, was walking off when the boy inquired:

"What's your name, mister?"

"My Sammy, on Liverpool," answered the man. "What's yours, you greenhorn?"

"Inventive Ben," was our young friend's answer. "Say, leave me my stick. I carved the head myself, and don't want any darned Britisher to own the head of the Father of our Country."

"You're a cheeky one," laughingly retorted the fellow, as he sent the stick high into the air, and in another moment was off, moving with the peculiar jog-trot of his profession.

It soon became very dark, and Thatcher, being wet and tied up like a calf, felt exceedingly uncomfortable. However, he was true grit and bore his position with the greatest patience, when some one tumbled over his prostrate body, and as the new-comer picked himself up, the boy heard him murmur:

"Drunk! Here's a chance for a new suit of clothes and a pair of boots."

SEAWAIF.—"SUDDENLY, HOWEVER, A FORM DETACHED ITSELF FROM THIS OBSCURITY AND STEPPED INTO THE MOONLIGHT. IT WAS A FIGURE ENVELOPED IN A LONG, LIGHT, MUSLIN MANTLE, WHOSE FOLDS LEFT NOTHING VISIBLE BUT TWO LARGE AND BRILLIANT EYES."

"My friend, I am not intoxicated. I have been robbed and bound," politely observed Ben. "Will you be kind enough to release me?"

"Not by a jolly long way until I have stripped you," was the man's cheerful response; saying which he, in a most scientific manner, proceeded to remove the boy's garments, taking care to sit on one limb while he operated on the other; as he did so, his victim remarking:

"You're a Britisher, ain't you? No true-born American would be guilty of such blamed meanness. Why don't you learn an honest trade?"

"I've got a profession, but it won't keep me," sighed the robber. "I'm not a regular thief, but since I have been in this country have never earned a cent, and my clothes are all to pieces."

His voice was so mournful that Ben could not refrain from asking him what his business was, when, to his horror, the man said:

"Young fellow, I'm an inventor of burglar-alarms."

By that time Thatcher was reduced to his undergarments, while the tramp, who had coolly cast aside his rags, was dressing himself in Ben's attire.

"An inventor?" gasped the boy, rising, and glancing at the footpad; "you an inventor? Well, you can keep my things; I'll make you a present of them," saying which he picked his way over the flinty road, leaving the man to enjoy his plunder.

In a short time the vagabond had put on the stolen shoes and vanished after his fellow-tramp, when Thatcher, who was seated near the tree, drew forth his carpet-bag, murmuring:

"And am I to sail down the river of time in such company as that cuss? No, by thunder!"

However, as he dressed himself in a suit of thick Winter clothes he remembered Fulton, McCormack, Singer, Morse, Edison, and other celebrated men, and curling himself up under the trees, muttered:

"I don't think either of those inventors ever tried tramping. It ain't a cheap way of traveling, after all; besides, I believe that last fellow lied. Burglar-alarm, indeed!"

The next morning, after hunting for and finding his stick, he resumed his journey, but being clothed in thick garments, sweated fearfully, and did not reach town until noon.

Proceeding straight to the first bakery, he entered the store, and accosting the proprietor, said:

"Want a young man to learn your business, mister?"

(To be continued.)

"Inventive Ben" was commenced in No. 561.

A SNAKE-KILLING CAT.

MR. CHARLES BAKER, a granger, living near Mohawk, Arizona, is the happy possessor of a cat which unites with the ordinary pursuits of the well-regulated feline mind the laudable though novel occupation of slaughtering rattlesnakes. The cat watches them until they uncoil and start to glide off, then jumps and catches them by the back of the neck, chewing the vertebræ till the snakes are dead, and with his claws tearing loose any coils that may be thrown around his body. He has already killed several.

Distinguished Scholars of Jersey City (N. J.) Schools.

GEORGE T. BROWN,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 3, BRIGHT STREET, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

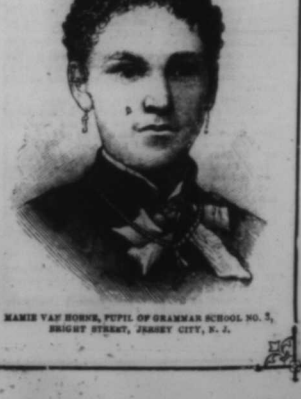
GEORGE T. BROWN is a distinguished pupil of Grammar School No. 3, Bright Street, near Barrow, Jersey City, N. J. He is the son of Thomas C. Brown, a well-known merchant of that place, and Annie T. Brown. He was born at Bayonne, N. J., January 19th, 1867, making him twelve years of age. Beginning at the usual age, he attended a private school for a short time, and then entered the Primary Department of No. 3. He has been regularly in the school since that date, and has gone through all the lower studies and the grammar branches up to the third division of the first class. "I regard him as a very bright boy indeed," said Mr. George W. Reade, the courteous principal. "He is intelligent, amiable and diligent." If the reader will look at the intellectual and handsome face of this boy, as so well shown in our portrait, it will confirm the good opinion given of him. His head is large, with a fine development of the forehead; his eyes are dark, and all the features are regular and expressive. He is cheerful in his nature, and manly in his manner and conduct. In the school he has made a reputation which is creditable to him, in regard to every day and every act during the whole period that he has been in its classes. Judging by the past and present, his future will be brilliant and honorable. Grammar School No. 3 has 347 seats in the Grammar Department, and 496 in the Primary. It is well conducted, and always crowded with improving pupils.

GEORGE T. BROWN, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 3, BRIGHT STREET, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

MAMIE VAN HORNE,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 3, BRIGHT STREET, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

MAMIE VAN HORNE is a pupil of the first division of the first class of Grammar School No. 3, Bright Street, Jersey City, N. J. It is a mixed class of boys and girls, and Mamie Van Horne is the head scholar. She was born in Jersey City, November 9, 1864, making her in her fifteenth year. She is the daughter of William E. and C. Van Horne. When six or seven years old she became a member of the Primary Department of No. 3. Later she went to Primary School No. 5, and then was in the Grammar Department of Grammar School No. 1, finally returning to No. 3, where she entered the third Grammar Class. She has studied with much intelligent application, and at a recent promotion was admitted to the highest class of the school. She is devoting her time and thoughts to study with the same intelligence and vigor as before. Her ambition is not only to do well, but to excel to a degree that will prove at once her intellect and the earnestness of her efforts. She has an interesting face and modest manner. Her goodness of heart, and her pure and perfect character, endear her to all. She was called from the crowded class when selected for this notice. The Principal, the teachers and her classmates all expressed in look what the first declared—"Mamie Van Horne is our most distinguished pupil."



MAMIE VAN HORNE, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 3, BRIGHT STREET, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

SEAWAIF;

Or,

THE WHITE KING OF NIMIGI.

The Marvelous Adventures of a Boy, a Monkey and an Elephant in the Wilds of Africa.

By JACK MANLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THREE LIVES," "SUPE THE SHADOW," "GHOSTS OF THE BUCCANEERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHICH LOOKS VERY MUCH AS IF SEAWAIF WOULD BECOME A MARRIED MAN, AFTER ALL.

AS may be supposed, Seawaif was almost unnerved by the events described in the latter part of the last chapter.

He had made up his mind to die, and had faced his doom without a murmur.

But to be recalled to life, and by such extraordinary means, struck him like a blow between the eyes.

What happy accident had brought Thunderbolt here?

The answer to this question was an easy one. The elephant had in all probability followed the slave-dealers, hoping to find his master among them, and been finally seized and sold by them to some one who brought him to Nimigi.

In the meantime, while Mako was saluting his old friend with numberless caresses, while his master sat, half dazed by what had occurred, the Nimigians were wild with excitement.

They hated to lose their prey, but the command of their queen was inexorable.

Namoune exercised a really omnipotent power over her late husband's people, for she was a true ruler, as fearless as she was astute.

On her announcement of amnesty to the doomed youth the old chief had entered the arena, and, advancing to the balcony, asked:

"You command, then, that the whiteface shall live?"

"I do," was the reply.

"But the great Fetish has doomed him to death."

"The great Fetish has been overcome. The lion, his favorite beast, has been vanquished by the elephant."

"It is true," murmured the chief.

"Not only vanquished, but laid upon the very altar it was his mission to defend," continued the queen, from her invisible covert. "What more can we ask? Our Fetish is feeble. The elephant is the true one, for he conquered him. Let the elephant be proclaimed, then, the Fetish of our nation."

The old chief bowed his head.

"But the prisoner?" he said.

The queen remained silent for some minutes, then she said:

"Let him be returned With all he brought to his prison for the present. My will will be made known in time."

With this judgment the chief acquainted our hero, who still occupied his position on Thunderbolt's back.

At first he would have resisted, but a moment's thought convinced him of the foolishness of such a course.

He comprehended that the queen was kindly disposed toward him, or she would have allowed him to be exposed to another chance of death, and knowing that her power over her people was his surest protection, he assented.

"It is well," said the chief. "It is the queen's will that you return to prison, but we will not bind you. Will you descend?"

"Why should I? I can ride just as well."

"The elephant has become the great Fetish of Nimigi. You must leave him here."

Seawaif hesitated—then he said:

"Well, if I must, I suppose I must."

And he descended to the ground.

Mako faltered between his two friends.

Then with a last caress to Thunderbolt, he dropped to the earth, too, and joined his master.

"Remain here, old boy," said our hero, in English, caressing Thunderbolt's ears, for the faithful beast had knelt to allow him to descend. "Let them worship you. It amuses them and don't hurt you, and when I want you I can find you."

The elephant, who seemed to understand, rose.

Then the sorcerer and his assistants approached and hung about his neck a great band of red velvet, embroidered with gold.

Having invested him with this insignia of his exalted station, they conducted him into the vault, where the dead lion had lived.

Still following his master with his intelligent eyes, Thunderbolt submitted.

Then the cortège returned by the way it had come.

This time Mako was free, and as soon as he saw Si Gibbs still toiling at the great water-wheel he bounded out of the ranks and fell upon him.

Nobody attempted to interfere, and within ten minutes the lifeless body of the miserable miscreant was detached from its chain and thrown to the buzzards.

Once back in his prison, Seawaif's strongly-tensed nerves gave way, and he sank, half-fainting, in a corner. When he recovered his self-possession it was night.

There was a little narrow slit of a window to the rude room that served for his cell, and the moon shone through it.

Through the fissures of the door, too, the pale light stole in ghostly streaks.

Feeble as this light was, it only served to envelop the place in shapeless shadows, into which Seawalf, yawning, looked with his drowsy eyes, without discerning any substantial shape.

Suddenly, however, a form detached itself from this obscurity and stepped into the moonlight.

It was a figure enveloped in a long, light, muslin mantle, whose folds left nothing visible but two large and brilliant eyes, which were fixed curiously on the prisoner.

Surprised by the apparition, and only half awake, Seawalf started up.

A cold hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"Who are you?" he asked, in English.

The figure made a sign that it did not understand him, and he repeated the question in Congo.

This time he received an answer.

A voice soft and melodious, unmistakably that of a woman, replied in the same tongue:

"A woman."

"I could guess that," replied our hero, impatiently. "Can't you tell me something newer?"

And he strove with his eyes to ascertain more of the unknown.

But vainly.

The hair, or mantle, in which she had enveloped herself, effectively covered her identity from prying curiosity.

"You have told me what you are," he said at last. "Will you be kind enough now to say who you are?"

"A friend," replied the phantom.

"A friend in this place?"

"A true friend, be assured."

At this reply a strange thought crossed the listener.

The inexplicable friendship of the Queen of Nimigi suggested it, and he said, softly:

"You are the Queen Namoona."

"I am not," was the reply, and a low laugh gurgled from the speaker's throat.

"Ah!"

"But I come from her."

"For what purpose?"

"To convey her love to you."

"Hang it all!" muttered our hero. "Here's another nigger queen gone on me. This thing's getting altogether too thick."

"Namoune, the great, invincible Queen of Nimigi," continued the stranger, "has seen the great white face with the golden hair."

"I should rather say she had," murmured Seawalf, "and she came near seeing the last of him, too."

"She knows that the white man is greater than she."

"Indeed?"

"Because she can no longer remain queen."

"But why?"

"Since he will be King of Nimigi."

"It certainly don't look much like it, so far," remarked our hero, with a comical look at his sombre surroundings. "However, fire away. What have I got to do to become king?"

"To take a wife."

At this reply a reminiscence of more than one African princess crossed the prisoner's mind, and he began to get sick at the stomach.

Had he escaped Bem Bars to come to this?

"And if I refuse?" he asked, after a brief reflection.

"You will not refuse, after you have seen your bride."

"I don't know about that, for I have heard of her."

"From the white dog whom the buzzards have devoured?"

"Yes."

"True. He did know her. You ask, then, what will happen if you refuse?"

"I do."

"Namoune is a great queen. Her subjects are her slaves. What she did this day she can undo to-morrow. Look!"

And throwing open the door, the envoy of the Queen of Nimigi pointed out.

The moon flooded the high roof of the hall of judgment with light, and glinted on the gables of the outbuildings as it streamed down into the great court.

That inclosure was not solitary.

Dim shapes were grouped here and there, or moved to and fro like dusky phantoms.

Beside, or in the hand of each, gleamed the steel head of a long lance, or the polished blade of a broadsword.

"Those are the warriors of Nimigi," said the stranger. "They await the orders of Kida, the slave and ambassadress of Namoune the Great. What has the warrior to say? Will he become king or take his place in the world of the shadows?"

"Have I no other choice?"

"None. What word am I to give to the soldiers? That you are their king or their victim?"

"Must the word be given to-night?"

"It must."

"And the marriage——?"

"Will take place to-morrow, after certain ceremonies are gone through with."

"But, confound it!" cried Seawalf, "why do you come to me to-night, then?"

"Because the queen cannot sleep till she has your answer. You either consent or are torn to pieces at once."

Our hero uttered a groan.

"Very well, then," he said; "I consent."

"Namoune the Great will be happy at the words of the white warrior," remarked the slave. "I go to apprise her of them at once."

And she hurried off.

She closed the door, but did not replace the bar on the outside, and Seawalf, listening, heard her exchange some words with the soldiers as she walked away.

This fact inspired him with renewed hope.

She had probably told the warriors to discontinue their guard, and as the door was not fastened, what was there to prevent his making off?

"Easy does it," he said to himself. "I'll wait another hour, then, if luck only holds for me, and I can get hold of Thunderbolt, Queen Namoune can whistle for a white husband."

At the end of the time he had appointed for himself he woke Make and rose.

The door was still unbarred, and opening it, he looked out into the court.

Not a soul was in sight.

"By Jingo! the coast is clear," he thought.

And he stepped out into the moonlight.

Not a sound disturbed the silence but the sighing of the night-wind and the barking of some distant dogs in the town.

The court, as we have said, seemed absolutely deserted, and Seawalf advanced confidently toward the great gate.

Suddenly the harsh blast of one of the elephant tusk-horns sounded in front of him.

Another rang out at his side.

Another and another still behind him, and all around, until the deafening clamor made his head ache.

Then, as if they had started out of the earth, a swarm of armed men surrounded the fugitive.

Several of them hauled Make away in spite of his strenuous struggles.

Our hero found himself face to face with Kida.

This time she had permitted the mantle to fall from her head, and Seawalf noted her to be a very pretty girl, of a dark olive tint, with pouting lips and the prettiest little upturned nose in the world.

"My white brother is eager," she said, with a sarcastic smile. "Is he in such a hurry to see his bride?"

Seawalf blushed, for from the girl's tone he saw that she had fathomed his intention.

"Most men are eager for their wedding-day, are they not?" he asked.

"They should be," was the reply. "At any rate, my white brother, I hope that you are a brave man."

"Thank you. I am no coward."

"It is well. For before you see your bride you have before you a contest with iron, with the elements and the wild beasts. So nerve yourself. If you pass through the trial you are a king. If not——"

"Well, if not?"

"You perish by worse tortures than you ever dreamed of."

And by a sign she turned the prisoner over to the guards.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHOWING HOW AND WHY SEAWALF DECLINED TO BECOME A KING.

THE Queen of Nimigi, like the pulsant King Louis XIV., did not like to be kept waiting.

In spite of what Kida had said about his wedding of the morrow, the expectant bride, who had made up her mind to throw off her widow's weeds as soon as she could, had prepared the necessary initiatory performances for that night.

She only awaited the decision of the prisoner.

If he accepted he would have, before he espoused a princess of that race, to submit to the trials which each young Nimigian went through before he was legally regarded as a man.

If he rejected, his portion was death.

As we have seen, he preferred to live.

The whispered words of Kida assured him that the trials in store for him were mere shams, so he prepared to encounter them without hesitation.

The guards led him along the edge of the mountain, preserving as they went a most grim silence.

Not a human being was visible in the scattered houses, for the subjects of Nimigi were forbidden, under penalty of death, to witness the scenes of the young warrior's probation.

A few warrant dogs fled before their silent advance, and bats and owls, roused from their nests on the brow of the hill, flew off, breaking the stillness with dismal cries.

The party finally halted before a huge rock, which rose on the edge of the bluff like a chimney on a house.

Only it was quite as large as an ordinary house itself.

In one face of this colossal bit of granite a cavernous opening was visible.

"The white face is prepared to encounter the dangers of the great unknown," said the leader of the guard, breaking the silence for the first time.

"He is prepared for everything," responded our hero, curtly.

The warrior motioned toward the opening in the rock.

"Enter," he said.

Seawalf obeyed.

"Go forward," continued the Nimigian, in a voice that rolled into the blank gap in hollow echoes. "He who hesitates is lost."

Our hero began to move ahead at once.

At the third step the lights went out.

Then a dull echo behind him told that a heavy door, which he had noticed when he entered, had been closed behind him.

Left in total darkness, our hero stopped.

It was only for an instant, but in that time he could feel the walls of the cavern closing in on him, operated either by some mechanical contrivance which rendered them movable.

As soon as he started again the pressure relaxed.

Feeling his way along by the walls, which he could reach on each side of him by stretching out his hands.

In this way he reached what seemed to be the verge of a gulf.

A most noisesome and sickening odor rose from this unknown depth, mingled with strange, blood-thrilling noises.

As the young adventurer stood irresolute, some slimy sinuous object struck him in the face.

He uttered an involuntary exclamation of horror and reeled toward.

The object was a serpent.

The momentary shudder his contact with this loathsome creature sent through him caused Seawalf to loose his footing.

In a minute more he was in the bottom of a shallow pit.

And a shallow pit filled with writhing, squirming snakes.

A scream escaped the boy's lips as the hideous creatures swarmed around him, and he dashed forward, striking a wall of rock, which yielded before him.

When next he knew exactly what he was about he was descending an apparently interminable flight of steps, hewn from the rock.

The darkness was so intense that sparks of fire began to dance before his eyes.

The silence was so profound that his very heart-beats caused an echo, while the tread of his feet called forth a reverberation like loud thunder.

He seemed to have been hours going down when the steps ended.

The path still descended, and he followed it steadily.

The webs of great spiders broke upon his face, and fluttering bats and other vermin that haunt dark places brushed his shuddering skin.

Then a sound, which grew in volume at every step he made, became audible.

It was a roar such as a Winter torrent makes when bursting from its icy fetters it fills its dry bed with foam.

A few seconds more and his feet missed the earth.

A great wave came rushing down upon him, sweeping him away.

Seawalf, as we know, was a good swimmer, and though taken by surprise, struck out manfully.

Still the flood swept him on until a dull light appeared ahead, gradually brightening, until the torrent floated him out on a broad, still pool.

With a few strokes he reached the bank.

He stood in the middle of a circular cavern, surrounded by uncouth idols carved from the solid rock.

Behind him was the black arch under which the subterranean river entered the pool.

That body of water appeared to have no outlet.

The light, meanwhile, had gathered strength, like the spectral glow of a will-o'-the-wisp, till it flooded all surroundings with a fantastic illumination.

Where it came from, or what caused it, he could not determine.

He made a step forward, when the ground opened directly in front of his feet, as if riven asunder by an earthquake.

He stopped, with a sensation of renewed dread on him.

This chasm, so deep that it seemed bottomless, appearing like a phantom in the solid earth, conveyed to him a sense of strange dread.

"It's a trick of the game," he said, trying to shake off his trepidation, "and I'll play it to win, even if the stake is a wife with a black skin."

In spite of his nerve, however, he still hesitated.

A stone, detached by his feet, rolled into the gulf, and plunged down and down, rebounding from wall to wall, till its last echoes died away.

These echoes, lugubrious and long drawn out, prolonged themselves as dismally as the voices of tortured souls wailing from the depths of Hades.

Then he closed his eyes.

"It's part of the game," he repeated, "and I'll see it out. Here goes, for life or death!"

And he jumped into the chasm, with his hands at his side to keep him upright.

His fall was a long one, and with the wind knocked out of him, he landed on a flexible mass of vines, which, from their mat-like construction, he saw at once had been put there for the purpose they served.

They filled nearly all the gulf, which accounted easily for the absence of any sound of the stone's fall as it had dropped on them.

The glow overhead still continued, sending a strong shaft of light down the chasm.

By it Seawalf saw a steep and narrow flight of steps cut in the walls, to which the mat of vines was fastened.

They were forty-eight in number, and ended at a little level space, to which, on all sides, the chasm narrowed down like the interior of a colossal funnel.

As our hero's foot touched the bottom, an opening appeared in the rock in front of him.

Through this opening came a chorus of savage howlings such as he often heard in midnight forests —the clamor of hungry beasts of prey.

By this time Seawalf was ready for anything that might turn up.

He saw the trick of the entire performance, and shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

Without hesitation he passed through the opening, and found himself in an extensive vault, whose comparatively perfect construction showed it to have been hewed out by the hands of men.

A score of tigers and other ferocious beasts were confined to the rocky floor of this artificial cavern by invisible bonds, which, however, left a narrow path open across them.

Along this path, with the famished monsters snapping at his legs, our hero advanced toward an aperture in the other wall.

This aperture was dark when he looked at it first, but as he reached it a sheet of flame flashed from it.

He precipitated himself into the fire as if he enjoyed the invulnerability to that element that a salamander is credited with.

The flames were extinguished at once, and he stumbled headlong into a dozen strong arms which softly conveyed him forward and deposited him in what he knew by the feel of it to be a hammock.

He opened his his eyes and closed them at once, momentarily dazzled by the glare of the light that burst upon them.

"My white brother is a brave warrior," said a soft voice in his ear. "He is worthy to be the husband of the Queen of Nimigi."

The speaker was Kida.

Seawalf uttered a long sigh of relief.

"Your voice recalled me to life," he said. "I thought I was in fairyland."

And well he might.

He was in a cavern which human ingenuity had converted into a palace.

Great strips of brocade, velvet and cloth-of-gold tapestried the walls, and the floor, which was as smooth as polished marble, was covered with the same rich stuffs and strewn with flowers.

On all sides lovely slave-girls thronged, surrounding the adventurer with a barrier of faces fair in spite of their dark copper-color.

They offered him food and drink, fanned him and showered over him rain-drops of rare perfume.

This scene, the gorgeousness of the slaves, the warm bright light of countless copal torches, combined with the soft undulation of the silken hammock in which he rested, might well have impressed a much less romantic mind than Seawalf's with the idea that he was in fairyland.

Kida watched him with an expression of pleased curiosity on her pretty brown face.

"My white brother is satisfied?" she asked at last.

"Satisfied with what?" demanded our hero.

"With the pleasures his daring has procured for him."

"I would be hard to please if I wasn't. Is this the usual end of such experiences as mine?"

"It is. This is what we believe the paradise to be to which brave men go when they die."

"There's some advantage in being a brave man if such is really the case. However, I suppose I am not through with the show yet."

"Not quite."

And the beautiful slave made a sign with her hand.

The girl slaves fell back and disappeared, and a number of male servitors took their place.

These proceeded to invest our hero in a costume of fine cloth, sparkling with gold and priceless gems.

The dress was of a Turkish character, consisting of a long coat, opening in front and reaching to the wearer's heels, loose trowsers and a jeweled belt, to which was suspended a magnificently embossed scimitar.

The operation of attiring completed, one of the slaves clapped his hands.

Four stalwart negroes instantly appeared, bearing a covered palanquin.

Into this Kida, who now reappeared, directed our hero to mount.

He did so; the silken curtains of the litter were tightly drawn, and a musical chant from numerous female voices sounded as the equipage was slowly borne away.

The reflection of the lights through the curtain became dimmer, and a cool, damp air took the place of the warm, scented atmosphere of the cavern.

This was succeeded by a puff of wind that told the passenger the palanquin had reached the open air.

Then it began to ascend.

From the length of time this operation employed, Seawalf judged that his adventurers had led him down through the mountains to its very base.

Such was indeed the case.

He tried several times to look out, but each time the warning voice of Kida, who walked beside his conveyance, bade him desist.

Finally the procession gained the summit of the mountain, and took its way slowly through the town.

Day had dawned, and the people of Nimigi were up and stirring.

As the cortege passed they hailed it with loud shouts, the sound of their acclamations rending the very air.

The march continued to the palace, where the bearers halted and deposited their burden beside a fountain, through which perfumed water was sparring, in the middle of a vast court filled with all manner of tropical verdure.

Gayly dressed slaves flitted to and fro among the shrubbery, brilliant flowers intertwined with gaudy ribbons were festooned everywhere, and from an open door that seemed to lead to the kitchen the odor of a savory meal found its way out.

Seawalf sniffed it hungrily.

"It's my wedding feast," he thought. "I've brought a good appetite to it, any way."

"Is my white brother ready?" asked Kida, approaching, followed by several grave personages in embroidered robes, and bearing staffs tipped with gold.

"Ready to be married you mean?"

"Yes."

Seawalf shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose I am," he said, "so lead the lamb to the slaughter."

And he followed his guide and the officials with the staffs.

They led the way under a long, plastered colonnade to a doorway heavily ornamented with crude arabesque carvings in ivory, inlaid with gold.

A heavy velvet curtain closed this entrance instead of a door, and the men in the embroidered robes stationed themselves on each side of it.

At a concerted movement they drew the drapery aside.

"Enter!" said Kida.

Seawalf crossed the threshold.

At the same time a loud fanfarronade of tom-toms and trumpets sounded from the court, and a chorus of invisible singers began intoning one of those sweet but melancholy chants of which all savage races are so fond.

Our hero stood in the presence of Queen Namoune of Nimigi.

At the further end of a hall whose barbaric magnificence can be as easily imagined as described, was a platform six inches of feet high, covered with plates of hammered gold.

On this, seated in a chair of ivory, inlaid with gold and studded with gems, sat the bride for whom our hero had undergone such elaborate preparations.

She was forty-five, if she was a day, black enough to make blacking of, and as ugly as the ugliest yellow-dark that ever was thrown into a dog-catchers cart.

Her unprepossessing figure was attired with indescribable magnificence, and a dozen young slaves knelt around her, fanning her with great fans of ostrich plumes.

As if to burlesque her hideousness, these slaves were all white and exceptionally pretty.

As our hero advanced down the hall, his dusky bride grinned till she looked like an insane baboon.

A murmur of admiration evoked by the youth's handsome presence ran through the hall.

Even the poor white slave-girls ceased fanning their mistress and ventured timid glances at the stranger.

Seawalf, whose disgusted glance had wandered from the queen to her charming servitors, stopped in front of the throne, looking at one of them as if she had been a ghost.

The object of his regard on her part stared at him with equal intentness.

The queen, who had risen, noted this movement curiously.

"The whiteface who is to become the great Namoune's husband admires her slaves, I see," she said. "Are his eyes so busy with them that he cannot spare a glance for his bride?"

"For his bride!" repeated our hero, in accents of stupefaction.

"Yes; for me," responded Namoune with a sentimental leer.

"Lord help us," muttered Seawalf. "Does that old hag think I'm going to marry her? Not if the court knows itself, and it thinks it does."

And turning suddenly on the slave-girl who had attracted his attention, he extended his arms.

"Amy Gibbs!" he cried.

"Will Seawalf!" shrieked the slave.

And forgetting where she was and what she was in her excitement, she dropped her plumed fan and leaped from the dais into our hero's ready arms.

(To be continued.)

"SEAWALF" was commenced in No. 50.

THREE MERRY BOYS:

Their Adventures at School.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A COMMOTION—MR. MAKEMSMART OFFERS A REWARD —WHERE IS WILLIAM?

WHEN night came Mr. Makemsmart was seriously alarmed, as, in a terrible rage, he paced up and down the study.

"I wish to goodness his uncle had not gone away," the schoolmaster said to Mr. Writher. "This is the second time that the little wretch has run away."

"Verily," Mr. Writher replied, "he is a most perplexing lad, and I fear that he will come to no good."

"But that is not the question," Mr. Makemsmart said, in an exasperated voice. "Where the deuce has he got to?"

"That's the question!" Mr. Writher said, rubbing his head thoughtfully.

"If you can't talk less like an ass," Mr. Makemsmart bellowed, "don't talk at all. You make me so wild."

"I am very sorry," Mr. Writher replied, "and I will retire."

"No, stay," Mr. Makemsmart cried, clutching at his hair. "You are my—my usher, and I must have your assistance. Whatever may be the expense or trouble, this boy must be found, and quickly," Mr. Makemsmart said. "We will take Gooch's advice."

The sagacious officer came shortly, and when he had heard all, he said:

"If you leave it to my hands I'll bring him back safe and sound; but if you make a bother, you'll only drive him further away. Give me leave to offer a reward, and if I don't produce him within a week I'll eat my helmet."

Mr. Makemsmart acquiesced at once, and Gooch at once set out on the trail.

The boys were in a dreadful state about Tony, and even tears were shed.

"I thought something of this kind would happen," Bertie Baldwin said, dolefully. "The roads are full of tramps and vagabonds, and he may have fallen into the hands of some of the scoundrels."

"I wonder if Mr. Makemsmart would let us go in search of him?" Harry Walpole said.

"Not likely," Bertie Baldwin replied.

"Then I vote that we take French leave," Willie Howard chimed in.

"What good would that do?" Walpole cried. "Tony, if he really means to run away, is twenty miles away at the least; but, perhaps, after all, he is only hiding in the neighborhood to give us a fright."

The suggestion did not bring much consolation with it, and the boys looked gloomily out of the window at the empty playground.

"At any rate, I can't stand here," Willie Howard said. "I've got a fit of the blues."

"Then let us have a walk," Walpole said.

"Anything for a change," Mark Philo exclaimed.

"Let us see how old Snit is getting on."

Mr. Makemsmart and Mr. Writher were in no humor to stop the boys, although it was seven o'clock, and the pupils ought to have been at their lessons.

The boys had not gone far when they deserted Titus Salt, Jonah Slapdasher and Soker, walking arm-in-arm.

"We are in luck," Mark Philo whispered. "If Tony was only here, the fun would be glorious indeed."

"Hush!" Walpole said, under his breath. "If they hear us they will skedaddle."

So saying, he picked up a cabbage-stalk and sent it hurtling through the air.

The missile took effect, and Titus Salt's shiny hat rolled sportively down the road.

"Don't you do that again," he said, turning fiercely on Jonah. "I see you do it."

"You're a liar!" Jonah replied, all in one syllable.

"I had my hands in my pockets."

"Then it was Job Langford," Salt said. "I meant to say it was him at first."

"Which is likewise a lie!" Job said. "I never touched your busted hat!"

"Somebody did," Titus growled. "I'd like to know who it was. Oh, lor!"

This exclamation was occasioned by a well-dried and extremely prickly thistle, which, settling in the nape of his neck, clung there with the tenacity of a barnacle.

"Here, pick this 'ere hout, and give me a stick," Titus said. "There's boys about, and I'll have some o' their wile lives!"

Job carried a cudgel, and he handed it cheerfully to Titus, who rushed back, expecting to find the boys, but he was mistaken, as they had taken the precaution to creep through a gap in the hedge.

"There's summat curris about this," Titus said, rubbing his forehead. "There ain't nobody, and yet I gets busters with the-e cabbage-stalks. They can't come from the sky, that's aartin, but where do they come from?"

This was a poser that neither he nor his comrade could answer, and after groping about in vain for some time in the darkness, they were about to continue their journey, when a lump of soft clay fell upon Job Langford's nose.

"Here!" he cried. "boys or no boys, we must put a stop to this. Have any of you a match?"

Soker had a box, and Job, selecting one, struck it on the heel of his boot.

Then he produced an old newspaper, and converting it into a torch, raised it above his head and looked about.

"Here they are!" he cried. "Bust 'em! I knowed it was them young warmints. It's no use, you limps, you can't get away."

"We have not the slightest intention of doing so," Walpole said, raising his cap politely. "Ah! is that you, Job? How do you do? I hope I see you well."

"That's more than you'll feel in a minute," Job roared. "Now, mates, hup and hat 'em. No quarter and no surrender."

Salt and Soker replied valiantly, and Mark Philo got a bang on the side of his head which made him skip.

But he was amply avenged, and in less than two seconds Job Langford was deposited in a holly-hedge, from which he experienced great difficulty in extricating himself.

Titus Salt, however, had made up his mind to conquer or die, and roaring like a bull, bore down on Bertie Baldwin.

The lad stepped on one side, however, and lunging out, caught Titus full in the ribs.

Titus placed his hand on the smitten spot and gasped for breath.

Soker, wiser in his generation, ran away and left his friends to their fate.

The boys went on, and as luck or ill-luck would have it, they met William, who had been sent by Maryiar in search of his father.

William shrieked, but a handkerchief soon silenced him, and he was borne to a tree, tied securely, and left there.

Titus Salt did not linger a moment until he was safe in his own house.

"What's the matter?" demanded Maryiar.

"It's them boys again. Where's William?"

"I sent him to look after you. Haven't you seen him?"

"Not heven his shadder."

"Not seen him?" Maryiar shrieked; "then where on earth can the blessed boy have got to?"

Suddenly jumping up, she sent Titus flying into the fireplace, and then, snatching down her bonnet, put it on, declaring she would first find William and then go home to her mother.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TONY IS BROUGHT BACK — AN EXAMPLE TO THE SCHOOL — HOW HE REPENTED — A PAINFUL AFFAIR.

POLICE-CONSTABLE GOOCH was true to his word. He found Tony, and handcuffing him, returned with him in triumph.

Tony did not relish the idea of being handcuffed like a felon.

Quite a crowd assembled round the gate to witness his arrival, and one small boy, who did not belong to the school, ran into the town and reported that Gooch had caught three murderers, and had chained them together by their legs. This, of course, increased the crowd.

Tony was marshaled into Mr. Makemsmart's study, still handcuffed.

"I should like to know," Mr. Makemsmart continued, drumming his fingers on the table, "what made you run away. I need not tell you that this is the second time you have given me cause for anxiety and trouble."

"I ran away," Tony replied, after a long pause, "because I was miserable, and couldn't stand being whacked any longer."

"Oh, that was the reason, was it?" Mr. Makemsmart said, advancing frowningly, "perhaps I shall be able to supply an antidote which will cure you of your wandering propensities. You need not flinch, as I do not intend to flog you, but you will have the pleasure of spending a week in the lumber-room, and bread and water till you are in a repentant state of mind."

"Mr Writher will escort you to your new lodgings," Mr Makemsmart said, "and report to me daily how you are getting on; and as I have no wish that time should hang heavily on your hands, tasks will be given you to keep you engaged from nine o'clock in the morning till seven in the evening."

"Worse and worse," Tony groaned, inwardly. "I am the most unlucky fellow in the world!"

"Come," Mr. Writher said, gruffly. "Mr. Writher said. "You you will be nice and quiet up-stairs, and be able to study without fear of interruption."

Tony followed the usher, feeling as if he could have given all he possessed for one kick.

The lumber-room was a dreary place indeed, and filled with all sorts of rubbish.

A bedstead, a deal table, and a chair were brought up; his books were ranged in a row on the floor, and then Mr. Writher, turning to him with an affable smile, said:

"Are you hungry, Limpback?"

"Yes. I am very hungry," Tony replied; "but if you don't mean to give me anything you need not aggravate me."

"Aggravate you!" Mr. Writher said, elevating his eyebrows. "What do you mean by that?"

"Because I know you take a delight in it," Tony replied; "and if you stand there grinning at me I'll pitch something at your head."

Mr. Writher beat a hasty retreat, and closing the door, locked it behind him.

"If they think they are going to keep me here for a week, they will find themselves mistaken," Tony said, looking out of the window. "My Uncle Andrew is a peppery man, but he would never treat me like this."

Then Tony began to walk round and round the room, but presently he stopped directly opposite the door and examined it.

It was loose on its hinges, and the lock was out of order.

"That's all right," Tony muttered. "As soon as they are all in bed I'll visit the larder."

The day wore away, and Tony was not disturbed except when Mr. Writher brought him up a pitcher of water and a loaf.

As soon as it was dark, Tony set to work, and, out of some old clothes and a mask, he manufactured one of the most hideous objects ever viewed by mortal eyes.

Then he heard the sound of steps on the stairs, and knew that the boys were going to bed.

He could see the light from Mr. Makemsmart's lamp reflected on the playground, and waited patiently till it vanished; then, after allowing another hour to make sure that the coast would be clear, he succeeded in forcing the bolt of the lock back.

Tony then made his way down to the kitchen, and finding a cold pie, went to work, and the empty dish soon testified to his prowess.

Feeling refreshed, Tony, shouldering the dummy, crept softly down to the bedroom in which he had so lately occupied a place.

He listened, and, satisfied that his chums were asleep, opened the door and stole in.

Supporting the dummy on a chair, he got behind it, and working the legs with a string, began to groan.

"I say, Walpole," Bertie cried, "do you hear that? I wish you wouldn't make so much noise."

"Noise!" Walpole repeated. "You are kicking up the row; I am as quiet as a mouse!"

"Then don't do it again," Baldwin said. "Oh, my! what's that?"

"Where—" Walpole cried, starting up.

But not another word came from his lips.

He went down as flat as a pancake, and diving under the bedclothes, rolled himself up.

But an instant's reflection made him ashamed of himself, and, jumping out of bed, he struck the dummy a violent blow.

The figure rolled over and disclosed Tony grinning and rubbing his hands.

"How on earth did you get here?" Walpole said, bursting into a roar of laughter. "Tony, you artful beggar, there's no knowing when to have you."

"I came here on my legs," Tony replied; "and I thought I would give you a little surprise. Hush! Don't make so much noise, or you will wake Writher and Makemsmart, and then, shan't I catch it hot!"

"But how did you get out of your prison-house?" Walpole demanded.

"I took the liberty of shooting back the lock."

"You are decidedly a wonder, Tony," Bertie Baldwin said; "but it was too bad of you to frighten us out of our senses. What are you going to do now?"

"I am going to bed in this room," Tony replied, calmly; "and before anybody is up I shall be back in the lumber-room, looking like the picture of misery.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOB REPENTS AND MR. MAKEMSMART FORGIVES — JOY OF JOB LANGFORD.

THE schoolmaster had advertised for a porter, but all who had appeared had either been too tall or too short, and too fat or too lean, or had some objectionable qualifications, and in his heart Mr. Makemsmart intended to take Job back into his employment when he thought fit to come to him in a repentant mood.

When Job at last came and slid into the room Mr. Makemsmart pretended to be busily reading a book, and it was not until Job gave vent to a most dismal groan that he looked up.

"Well," said the schoolmaster "what is your business, pray?"

"I've come," Job mumbled, mopping his perspiring face with a not over-clean handkerchief—"I've come to know as 'ow—which I meanter ask as if you could be so kind as to give me something to do again. Wages ain't no object, but it's—it's a 'ome as I wants; and never ag'in will I——"

"I do not want any sentiment from you," Mr. Makemsmart said, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, "and I really do not know what to say to you."

"Say that you'll take me back ag'in," Job whined, "and you'll never have cause to repent it."

"Well, I will, on one condition," Mr. Makemsmart replied.

"Oh! name it, sir; name it!" Job cried, clasping his hands.

"It is that you will entirely abstain from intoxicating liquors," Mr. Makemsmart said.

"If you can find any liquor weaker than water I'll drink it," Job replied; "you can trust me

blacks, who fled like a flock of sheep. But pussy got a hold of one fellow in spite of the shots fired by his companions, and I think I never in my life heard a man howl so pitifully. Approaching close enough to make certain of my aim, I gave pussy two more bullets from my spare rifles, and she died instantly."

The man who had fallen into the clutches of this tiger was badly hurt; the creature had struck him a blow upon the shoulder with its paw, tearing the flesh from the bone and leaving it hanging in stripes. The wound presented a shocking spectacle, and the poor fellow undoubtedly suffered great pain. We stitched it up, bandaged the arm as well as we could under the circumstances, and administered a little brandy to the man. In the morning we decided

AFTER A MAN-EATER.—"THE TIGER HAD ENTERED THE HUT WHERE SHE WAS SLEEPING, AND HAVING APPARENTLY KILLED HER WITH A BLOW FROM ITS PAW, CARRIED OFF THE BODY."

to return to Sattybardah, and, following the same route we had come by, we arrived there about midday.

There was great enthusiasm in the village when the skin of the tiger was displayed—somewhat damped, however, at sight of the injured man, and the knowledge that our trophy had not belonged to the terrible man eater.

The next day we caused it to be made known throughout the village that we would make another effort to find and destroy the tiger which had proved such a terrible pest to its inhabitants, and offered a reward to any one who could discover and lead us to the haunt of the beast; but few seemed to care to be engaged in such a search, however tempting the guerdon.

We sent out our own servants and such of the villagers as offered themselves; they returned very much alarmed, declaring they had seen the tiger close to the spot where the remains of the native girl were found the day before yesterday. In ten minutes after the receipt of this news we were on our way to the place, accompanied by nine or ten natives or servants.

Arriving on the ground, we spent three hours in a provokingly unsuccessful search for the wary monster. At the end of this time we had examined more ground than previously, and arrived near a deep and very steep-sided ravine. It struck both Captain Lacy and Mr. Grant that this ravine was just the sort of place a tiger would be likely to choose for its lair; and the natives thought so too, for they evinced great reluctance to descend into it. Cautiously making our way down—for the foothold was precarious, owing to the looseness of the soil and steepness of the sides—we commenced a diligent search amongst the jungle at the bottom of the ravine.

Footmarks of the tiger were abundant, many of them quite fresh, and, besides bones and other remains of an enormous number of antelopes and animals of the deer tribe, we found two human skulls and some of the bones of five human bodies; but nothing was seen of the tiger itself.

In many places the grass was crushed down, as if the animal had been sleeping upon the spot, and the bark of several small trees bore marks of the creature's claws.

We were quite sure that the tiger would return to this ravine, if it were not now lurking somewhere at hand; but, as the presence of a large party of men so near its home might delay or prevent its approach, we dismissed all our attendants—who were nothing loath to depart—and prepared ourselves for the forthcoming contest.

There were a number of loose blocks of stone lying about, and with some of these we built up a sort of parapet to serve as a rest for our rifles; then we sat down and quietly waited the return of the man-eater to its lair, scarcely venturing to talk to each other, lest the sound of our voices should alarm the brute.

Perhaps an hour had elapsed when a low, purring growl warned us to be on the alert. The sound came from above, and, looking up, we perceived two large tigers on the edge of the ravine, preparing to make a descent. They were favorably situated for a shot.

Mr. Grant was the first to fire, and one brute fell to the bottom of the ravine, where it lay on its back, feebly pawing the air. The second tiger elevated its hair like an angry cat, and growled fiercely at us, till the advent of two or three bullets put a stop to its noise, and it disappeared, being apparently badly hurt.

We ran out of our shelter, and seeing that the first tiger was lying motionless, and evidently dead, ascended the side of the ravine as speedily as possible and pursued the wounded beast, which seemed to be anxious to make good its escape.

The broad splashes of blood lay in its track so thickly that we were able to follow it at a run, and, at the distance of half a mile or so, came up with it sprawling on the ground. It growled out a fierce defiance, but it was too far gone to show fight; indeed, it scarcely needed a *coup-de-grâce*. Afterward, upon opening this tiger, we found that it had been shot *through the heart*, and had actually run full half a mile after receiving the mortal injury—one of the most remarkable incidents of the tenacity of animal life that ever came under my notice.

Returning to the ravine, to make sure the other brute was quite *hors de combat*, we found that the single bullet fired by Mr. Grant had killed it, having entered the chest and traveled downward into the body.

Leaving the tigers where they had fallen, we returned to Sattybardah at once, and, when our success was made known, the excitement of the people was intense. They shouted and danced, and displayed the wildest gratitude toward us for ridding them of these fearful pests.

A large crowd of the men rushed away to fetch the tiger, and, when they returned, all sorts of insults were heaped upon the now harmless foe. The dead brutes were mocked and reviled, beaten with sticks, kicked, spit upon, and dragged about until the skins were quite despoiled.

The crowd also renewed the demonstration of their thankfulness toward us with so much enthusiasm that we were glad to beat a retreat to our tent, whither, however, we were followed by the unpleasantly grateful villagers, who would not retire until repeatedly requested to do so. Throughout the night the rejoicings were kept up with so much hubbub and drumming that we found repose impossible.

There could be no doubt but that one of the tigers we had slain was the beast which had killed so many of the villagers—indeed, it is reasonable to suppose that they were both man-eaters. They were male and female. The female was much the larger, her length being seven feet eight inches, exclusive of the tail, and she must have weighed at least six hundred pounds. The male was seven feet one inch in length, and he was altogether made more lightly than the female. His weight was probably no more than four hundred or four hundred and fifty pounds; but we had no means of ascertaining exactly.

DRIVING.

WHEN, as to the rule of the road. If he meets anything coming the opposite way, he must take it on his left hand; that is, in this country always turn to your right. Down hill he should progress carefully, especially when on two wheels, for then the extra weight of the cart hangs on the pad or saddle on the horse's back. A stumble and fall will probably break the shafts, certainly cut the horse's knees, and may pitch the occupant over the splash-board. Let him hold well in, sit well back, play firmly and lightly with his hand, ready to hold up sharply in event of a stumble. Even a sure-footed horse may make a false step from the pain of a loose, sharp-pointed bit of stone cutting his flog. A judicious and timely support from the rein may save the horse and preserve his balance, by thus suddenly shifting part of the weight of his head and neck on to the carriage itself. When the fyro has forfeited that name, it will be time enough for him to indulge in a little extra steam toward the bottom of a valley, so as to "cheat" the next hill of some of its terrors by the impetus thus gained. On four wheels, and with sure-footed horses, these tactics are safe enough.

AFTER A MAN-EATER.—"ONE LEOPARD TRIED TO ESCAPE FROM A DILAPIDATED HUT NEAR THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE, BUT SPEEDILY ROLLED IN THE DUST, PIERCED BY FIVE BULLETS."

Next to a powerful seat the mouth of the horse, and the lightness of the hand upon it, are the requisites. "Half the value of a horse is in his mouth," is an old maxim. Few owners are aware how much "manners" depend upon the bitting and handling of a horse. Shifting the rein from one bar to another makes all the difference in the going of the horse. The mouth is the link of communication between him and his driver; the bit must control him without fretting him, and the touch of the hand, unless light, deadens its own injunctions.

But suppose all this time we have been talking to a lady. Since ladies will insist upon fashion at all hazards, we must assume that our fair friend in this case is making the best of a bad job, and is driving from one of the stereotyped powerless lounges of a lady's phaeton. It is more because of this sacrifice to elegance than to the difference in physical strength between women and men that "manners," command so high a price, apart from make and shape, in ladies' harness horses. Artificial high action is also inculcated by early lessons at draught across deep-plowed furrows, to give the animals an appearance of higher mettle than they can safely possess. Now and then mistakes are made, and animals are selected which a lady could control from a box seat, but which are beyond her powers from the armchair seat of a phaeton. Even if no bad casualty occur, a dispute with a trader for breach of warranty as to "quietness" is the result of the system. Well, it cannot be helped. Let us assume and hope that the pony is a quiet one, and that the lady has nerve. Though the pony is quiet, we also hope that he is a free goer; if not, he will work only as much as he likes. A lady at the best of times has no great strength of wrist to wield a whip, and with a splash-board as high as her face between her and her quadruped, she can only administer a "reminder," which may suffice if he is free, and springs to a touch of the lash; but real "punishment" is out of her power.

But of all ladies' phaetons the most dangerous are those in which four occupants sit inside, those riding backward sitting *vis-à-vis* to the driver, who thus has to drive over their head, and is further removed than ever from control of her pony, for which propinquity as well as elevation is essential. It may seem a light matter that a lady should be so placed as not to be able to punish her pony severely; her gentler nature of mercy may lead her to think this but a slight drawback, involving only slow progression at worst. Yet, with a sing or a shyer there is danger; for the former, if he cannot be made to run up to his bit, may bring her into danger where she needs to guide him clear of passing vehicles, especially in a crowd; and though it is always best in the case of a shyer to undeceive his terror, by leading him gently up to what frightens him, that he may smell and reconnoitre it, and so reassure himself for the future, yet there are times when a shy horse that cannot be whipped up to his bit may involve those behind him in a dangerous predicament.

Shyers are *prima facie* outside the warranty of "quiet to ride or drive," but slugs are compatible with the terms.

He who caters for a lady in horse-flesh should avoid the latter almost as scrupulously as the former.

AFTER A MAN-EATER.—"BY STOOPING I AVOIDED THE BEAST, WHICH WENT OVER MY HEAD AND ALIGHTED SIX OR SEVEN FEET BEYOND ME."

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET;

OR,

Fun at Mrs. Hawk's.

CHAPTER IX.

SEMI-DIET.

ALL reserve being now banished from the party, the conversation became general.

"I suppose you've left a sweetheart behind you in the country to lament your loss, haven't you?" said Constance.

Rose looked at her a moment without replying, and then echoed the word:

"Sweetheart?"

"I mean a lover. Of course you have a lover. All girls have. It's a necessity of their very nature to love and be loved, and I suppose you're not different from anybody else?"

"Oh, no," returned Rose, laughing as she spoke; "I've lots of lovers."

The fair members of the club opened their eyes rather widely at this avowal.

"Lots?" they ejaculated, in a tone of surprise. "How many?"

"Let me see," Rose went on; "there's father and granny, Solomon and dear old Kit Crummy, and then there's Shacabac, and Blinker, and Cackle, and Spit and——"

"Stop, stop!" cried the girls; "you're giving us the list of the whole village. You couldn't love all."

"Yes, I could," returned Rose, with affectionate warmth. "I loved everybody and everything there."

"And who's Shacabac?"

"The donkey."

"And Blinker?"

"The horse. Poor old fellow! he was a famous hunter once; but he's past that now, being lame and blind of one eye. That's why he was christened Blinker."

"And Kit Crummy—who's he?"

"Such a jolly boy; he was my playmate. Dear old Kit, you would like him so; he was such a good-natured fellow. We used to ride races in the woods and have such fun. Ah, Kit was the one for a lark, if you like."

"I don't much admire his name," remarked Constance, who was rather inclined to be sentimental. "Kit sounds common, and Crummy seems to suggest a baker, or a French roll, or something of that sort."

"He's the best fellow in the world!" cried Rose, enthusiastically.

"Handsome?"

"Well," returned Rose, "I don't know that I ever gave it a thought whether he was or not. I suppose beauty's a matter of taste. But he used to look very nice on Sundays, when he washed his face and put on his best corduroys."

"Ugh! I think if there's anything particularly obnoxious, it's a horrid creature with round rosy cheeks and corduroys."

"Ah, but you wouldn't call Kit a horrid creature if you knew him," persisted Rose. "He'd go through fire and water to serve any one he liked, and no one can be horrid who would do that."

No one felt inclined to continue the argument, and Milly said:

"The only perfect specimen of a boy I ever encountered is Mrs. Hawk's page, Peter, or Pet, as we call him."

"Oh, I know him," exclaimed Rose, laughing. "I think he's a very jolly boy."

"He's a regular little brick, I assure you," joined in Charlotte, "and does everything we ask him."

At this juncture the small individual in question appeared in the distance, balancing a knife-tray very skillfully on his head.

"That's a signal dinner is nearly ready," remarked Milly. "I wonder whether you'll sit at our table. I hope you will."

"Is that where they have 'demi-semi' diet?" inquired Rose, innocently.

"Why, are you under that *régime*?"

"Not yet," laughed Rose. "At present I'm on 'semi-diet.' Mrs. Hawk seems to think I look rather too healthy for a young lady, and that the only remedy is the particular kind of food I have mentioned. If 'semi-diet' doesn't cure me I'm to be put on 'demi-semi.' What sort of stuff is it? Is it nice?"

Charlotte Merry shook her head with some seriousness as she said:

"We won't attempt to describe it, as description would fail. You'll soon find out by practical experience."

"Have you experienced it yourself?" asked Rose.

"I should think I had," returned Charlotte. "When I first came here Mrs. Hawk had the impertinence to tell me I was too fat—only fancy! Well, she put me on 'semi-diet.' That wouldn't do, and then she tried 'demi-semi.'"

"And did that cure you?"

"Look at me and judge for yourself," laughed Miss Merry. "I'm not quite a skeleton, am I?"

"Not quite," answered Rose, laughing in return, as she contemplated the round, plump figure of the speaker. "I think you're as unlike a skeleton as any one could be."

"Yes. Mrs. Hawk gave me up as a failure, and was glad to put me on full diet again."

At this moment the playground bell rang for dinner, and the young ladies hastened to prepare for that important meal by washing their hands and arranging their hair.

This done, the page came to summon them to the refectory.

There were three tables spread. The first was for the more advanced pupils, and, of course, included the members of the Jolly Girls' Club.

The second table was appropriated to the younger scholars, and the third to those who, like Rose Royston, were afflicted with the great blessings of robust health.

The matron Hawk, who officiated as carver, assisted by her daughters, who superintended the vegetables and pastry, stood at the end of the room, grasping her carving-knife and fork as though they had been weapons of warfare, and looking down in a very stern and determined manner at the boiled leg of mutton which smoked before her.

The young ladies entered in the most orderly manner possible and took their seats.

AFTER A MAN-EATER.—"MR. GRANT WAS THE FIRST TO FIRE, AND ONE BRUTE FELL TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE, WHERE IT LAY ON ITS BACK, FEEBLY PAWING THE AIR."

Rose and Violet, not knowing where they were to sit, remained standing, waiting for directions, which were soon given by the deep voice of the principal.

"Miss Leigh will occupy a seat at table No. 1, between Miss Grey and Miss Westlake," she said.

Violet being seated, Mrs. Hawk continued: "Miss Royston, being on semi-diet, will sit at No. 3."

She pointed as she spoke to a solitary table at which no one else sat, and here Rose placed herself, wondering what was to come next.

She was very hungry, and watched the process of serving with considerable interest.

She could not help wondering at the calm, self-possessed manner in which Pet performed his official duties.

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET.—"'IT'S ALL RIGHT; I'M OUT.' AND SO SHE WAS. WITH FLUSHED CHEEKS AND BREATHLESS WITH HER EXERTIONS, SHE STOOD ON THE EXTERIOR WINDOW-SILL, LOOKING DOWN TRIUMPHANTLY ON HER COMPANION. 'HAVEN'T I DONE THAT WELL?' SHE SAID, WITH A JOYOUS LAUGH."

This temporary abstraction was absolutely necessary, since he had to deliver a message with almost every plate.

Violet's appetite was delicate, and required tempting, and, besides this, she had an antipathy to the Wednesday's dish, and as she saw the plates handed one after the other to her companions, she began to have serious misgivings that when her own turn came she would not be able to eat a morsel.

She whispered her apprehensions to Milly.

"I don't like boiled mutton at all," she said, "and I'm sure I couldn't touch it unless it was very well done. And then the fat—ugh!"

Poor Violet subsided into a vivid shudder, and hoped fervently that she might be forgotten altogether. Milly whispered to her the following little piece of advice:

"Tell Pet what you want, and if you find afterward you can't eat it, you must give it to Fidèle."

"Who's Fidèle?" Violet asked.

"Mrs. Hawk's lapdog; an awful little glutton, but a perfect treasure to us. He'll eat as much fat as you like to give him."

This was some comfort, and Violet glanced anxiously at the little curly-haired, over-fed animal, as he waddled up and down, looking out for scraps from his numerous patrons.

At length it came to her turn to be served.

The page inclined his ear, according to custom, to receive her orders.

She did not as yet understand the etiquette of the refectory, and made no remark; so Pet settling her down at once as one of the "good appetites," simply observed:

"I s'pose you'll take somethink of everythink, miss?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" hastily murmured the young girl, with real horror; only a little—a—a very little, if you please; well done—very well—brown, if possible"—in her anxiety she forgot that boiled legs of mutton did not as a rule reach that tempting and delicious gastronomic color—"and—a—no fat."

She lowered her voice, and in an earnest, pleading whisper, added:

"Oh, pray, don't bring me any fat, there's a good boy; I can't bear it."

Pet was but mortal. Violet Leigh's blue eyes melted him at once.

"All right, miss. I won't bring yer any if I can 'elp it," he whispered, assuringly; "but the old 'un's rayther perwerse at times, and insists on fat. It all depends on the humor she's in at the minnit."

The small youth, putting on a very business-like air, remarked:

"Miss Leigh—very small piece—knuckle end—not too much dumpling, and no fat."

Having given these directions he fixed his eyes boldly upon the face of his mistress, and, as it were, examined the state of the weather in that quarter.

It was decidedly cloudy, for she muttered to herself in an irritable and abstracted manner:

"Knuckle end, indeed! A leg of mutton cannot be all knuckle. It's gone long ago. With respect to dumplings, I expect all my pupils to partake of a sufficient quantity of farinaceous food—it's wholesome. But in Miss Leigh's case the absence of fat would be highly detrimental. Her constitution requires fat."

"She don't like it, mum," remarked Pet.

"Stuff and nonsense—she must like it!" grumbled the principal.

"Won't do the young lady no good if she eats it agin her will, you know that, mum," replied the page.

"Hold your tongue, sir!" snapped Mrs. Penelope, as she placed a painfully large piece of the adipose material on Violet's plate.

"There!" she exclaimed, emphatically; "that is for Miss Leigh, and I wish her to understand distinctly that she is expected to eat it."

The poor girl's heart quite sank within her as she received her portion.

"Oh, dear!" she faltered, in dismay, "I shall never be able to get through all this!"

"I tried all I could, miss," he said, "but the old un's orful cantank'rous just now."

Violet endeavored to resign herself to her fate, or rather, to her plate, and looked around for the accommodating Fidèle.

But that useful little gourmand was at that moment under No. 2 table, where a variety of tid-bits were falling around him.

Rose sat patiently wondering when her turn would come.

Pet pitied her, and proved his sincerity by slipping a potato into her hand.

Rose accepted the gift gratefully.

She had demolished it long before it came to her turn to be served, and when that arrived the semi-diet was at once explained.

A diminutive scrap of meat, that required a magnifying glass to render it visible, half a dumpling, and one potato.

Rose ate what there was to eat in silence, and sent up her plate for more.

The result of this application was a discontented growl from the carver, a muttered remark about "gluttony," and another fragment of farinaceous food in the shape of a quarter of a dumpling, which excited Rose's indignation extremely.

"I should like some more meat, if you please," she said to the page, pushing back her plate to him.

"Will you ask Mrs. Hawk?"

"I'll ask," he replied, shrugging his shoulders; "but it won't be no use."

Pet was quite right, the application was rejected.

"No!" was the stern response, "not on any consideration whatever. I'm surprised at Miss Royston supposing I should allow any pupil on semi-diet to be served more than once with meat."

"But you gave me such a very little," cried Rose, looking from her seat full at the preceptress. "I'm as hungry now as I was at first."

"I have no doubt you are," returned Mrs. Hawk, with a certain amount of satisfaction in her tone; "it is what we aim at in semi-diet to keep up a constant state of hunger."

"But I don't like to be always hungry," was the discontented reply. "I haven't been used to it, and I'm sure my uncle would not wish me to be starved if he knew it."

These bold remarks were so entirely opposed to Mrs. Hawk's ideas of the respect due from the scholar to the instructress that she became perfectly indignant.

Mrs. Hawk drew herself up and exclaimed:

"You are under my care, Miss Pert, and your uncle has nothing whatever to do in the matter. You are to obey me, and no one else. I consider your conduct perfectly outrageous."

"I'm hungry and want my dinner," retorted Rose. "I don't see anything wrong in that."

"Once for all, I tell you you are on a limited *régime*," answered the schoolmistress, "and your demands is utterly impracticable; and not only that, but the extremely insolent manner in which you have taken upon yourself to address me compels me to say that you will be deprived of your half-holiday, and remain this afternoon in solitary confinement in the schoolroom."

Rose made no reply, and once more Mrs. Hawk rather flattered herself that she had crushed the rebel spirit of her new pupil with a strong hand.

She was about to dismiss the young ladies, when Janet Sly, the housemaid, entered, and after whispering confidentially to her mistress, placed a letter in her hand.

But when she opened the *billet* and read it, her face became fiery red with indignation, and she appeared perplexed as to what steps she ought to take.

She conferred with her daughters and showed them the letter, and they evidently shared in their mamma's agitation.

The Jolly Girls had seen Janet Sly deliver the letter, and, not having as yet been dismissed, remained still in their seats, silent spectators of the emotional exhibition on the part of the Hawks.

None of them liked the housemaid, whose name matched her disposition admirably, she being a cunning, prying woman, who was regarded by the girls in the light of a spy.

As soon, therefore, as they perceived her place the note in the hands of her mistress, they suspected something was not quite right.

CHAPTER X.

AN ANONYMOUS LOVE-LETTER.

THEY were not kept long in suspense, for the principal, having somewhat recovered from her indignation, remarked, abruptly:

"No. 2 table may retire."

The pupils at No. 2, glad to be dismissed, speedily left the room, and then Mrs. Hawk, after rolling her large eyes over the young ladies at No. 1, addressed them in a voice of terrible sternness.

"I have," she commenced, "just received a shock which requires all my firmness to endure. Some designing monster in the form of man has dared to desecrate the sanctity of my establishment by writing a love-letter."

Of course there was a great sensation.

The Number Ones became at once immensely interested.

They looked at Mrs. Hawk and the two Misses Hawk, and then they looked at each other, with that peculiar glance of inquiry which seemed to say:

"To whom, I wonder?"

"Yes, young ladies," the principal went on, "a love-letter! And, not content with inditing the vile compilation, he had the audacity to throw it over the wall that surrounds my domains, where it was fortunately discovered by Janet Sly. Is it not terrible?"

A lurking smile flitted round several rosy mouths, and a few pairs of bewitchingly bright eyes tried to look serious, and failed signally.

TALES WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—ST. PETERSBURG BAKER DELIVERING BREAD——A NOBLEMAN'S COACHMAN, WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILD. SEE PAGE 78.

The Misses Hawk alone seemed to be impressed with the proper sense of indignation under such alarming circumstances, and they declared it to be:

"Audacious!—shocking!"

Mrs. Hawk then opened the note, which was written on pink paper, with the utmost caution, as though the mere act of touching the obnoxious *billet* burnt her fingers, and held it out at arm's length.

How eagerly the eyes of the young ladies fastened upon it! each one flattering herself, of course, that it must be for her.

The deep voice of their preceptress recalled their attention.

"Pink paper!" she exclaimed, in a tone of disgust, "and perfumed with horrid musk; pah! but you shall hear the wretched jargon, which is evidently the production of some reckless foreigner."

It begins thus:

"Loafiest of ze most loafy—*Ze* coam from von vich do not know you, an' vich you do not know. Shall you not say I am bold to dare to address you in ze manner? oh, yes, I am very much bold, but *pardonnez*, pardon me! Ze zeal I feel send me out of my veets, an' I scarce know how to stand on my 'ed or my 'eels. I take up my pen *à écrire* to rite; I make a big sigh an' a big blot at ze same time. But you will 'ave *pâté* upon me.

"Oh, yes! your genius 'eart shall feel for ze poor *exilé Français* vich vas driven from 'is native contree an' coam to England vizout frien's an' vizout mounee. Ah, *helas*, I endure varee much 'ardship! My lan'lidee ask me for my rent, I 'ave none to give 'er. Did she drop ze tear of sympathy at my 'ard fate? No! she insult me!—call me 'frog-eatin' Frenchman!'—me, a count, descend from ancestors *illustres*.

"Could I bear this? No! I rush from ze 'ouse in despair. Just as I vas about to throw myself into a ditch, and put an end to my *misère*, your bright image, like a sonbeam, come across my path an' make of me *toute à-coup* in von minute—ha, ha! a perfect cure.

"I no longer vish to die, I resolve to leeve—to leeve for ze sloan. I valk along by se side of se forty young ladees; I am shabbe an' my do not notice me; but I listen to your sweet voice; I feast my eyes upon your loafy form, your bright eyes, your silken tresses and ze ruby lips.

"I 'ave *difficulté* very grate to keep out of sight of ze ugly old she-dragon viz ze blue feazair in ze crimson bonnet an' ze big nose vich valk be'ind an' keep guard ovair you like ze cuttin' ole cat ovar ze poor littel mouses. I vatch you entair ze school-gate, an' I feel zat you take away my heart viz you.

"I try to forget you, to banish your *belle image*, but it vill not go. I smoke varee much *cigarres* to try and confuse my ideas, but zey vill not be confuse. So at last it strike me all of a sudden zat I vould rite to you. So I rite an' trow ze lettair ovair ze vall. Oh, zat I could hope zat it should coam into your fair 'ands, or zat I could by ovare like a leetle Cupid an' drop down at your foots.

"Pardon my boldness, an' believe me *pour toujours*—for ever—your true lovair, though unknown at present, "EXILE.

"P. S.—Often shall I vander near ze spot zat contain my loaf. Do not be surprised if you see me von day all of a sudden looking down upon you from ze top of ze vall. Do not trown upon me. Adieu!"

After the principal had finished this effusion there followed an impressive pause.

The epistle appeared to the young ladies as sincere, impassioned and ardent, three very strong recommendations in a love-letter—and the general feeling it elicited was one of pity and sympathy, for the poor but highly born exile.

Certainly there was a strong peculiarity in some of the expressions, and in the turn of some of the sentences used by the illustrious writer which provoked an occasional smile whilst the letter was being read.

But, then, he was a foreigner, and under these circumstances such grammatical trifles were not too severely criticised.

And, then, besides, there was the crowning halo of romance and mystery about the whole affair that invested it with an inexpressible charm.

No one knew who Exile was. None knew which one it was whom Exile loved so distractedly. But every one dared to imagine it might be herself.

Mrs. Penelope Hawk, as she scrutinized the faces of her young charges, fancied she discerned in them far more sympathy for, than horror at, the daring individual who had so recklessly disturbed her peace of mind. She was gladdened at her daughters, but they appeared to be wrapped in profound meditation.

Both Priscilla and Prudence were in the habit of accompanying their mamma and the pupils when they walked abroad, and why should it not be one of them with whom Exile was smitten?

A charming little genuine palpitation was going on beneath the *corsets à Paris* at this pleasing idea, which gradually increased in intensity until the features of the elder became suffused with a delicate tint, extending even to her delicate nose, the extremity of which glowed like a ripening cherry.

Not that the Hawk *mère* had the least suspicion of any such imagining on the part of her daughters.

Their ideas of propriety were of far too rigid an order, she believed.

It was her pupils of whom the sternly-correct matron stood in doubt. And with this suspicion strong in her mind, she exclaimed at length:

"There, young ladies, I have read this vile composition; do you know anything about it?"

No one knew anything.

"Look at it; examine it; perhaps some of you may recognize the handwriting, and so a clue may be gained."

The preceptress placed the *billet-doux* before Constance Grey, who, having perused it to her infinite satisfaction, passed it on to her friend, Milly Westlake, who, after reading, transferred it to Charlotte Merry, who turned it over in due course to Violet Leigh.

Rose Royston, being alienated from the group at the semi-diet table, was cut off from all the fun; but her curiosity was excited, and as soon as she observed Violet had finished, she said:

"I should like to read that letter, if you please, ma'am."

"There is no necessity for your doing so," was Mrs. Hawk's sharp reply; "it would not answer any good purpose, and I, therefore, decline to accede to your request."

She then turned to the other pupils and continued:

"You have now not only heard this insidious production, but you have also read the vile scrawl with your own eyes; and I once more ask you do you recognize the hand?"

No one recognized it.

"Have you the remotest suspicion—the faintest possible idea, as to the probable writer of such an abomination?"

Not one of the young ladies had even the most indistinct glimmer of any such thing.

"One fact is very palpable," went on the principal; "it was intended for some one in my domestic circle, and, as I am the centre of that circle, I wish to know who that some one is."

Mrs. Hawk was not by any means alone in that wish.

"Perhaps it is a mistake, ma'am, after all," suggested Constance Grey.

"A mistake!" exclaimed the preceptress, in a thorough bass tone, that seemed to come almost from her pockets; "what do you wish to convey by the term 'mistake'?"

"The writer of the letter might have been addressing a young lady whom he supposed to be a resident at Meditation House, but who does not live here," returned Constance, simply and definitely.

"No, Miss Grey!" answered the principal, sternly; "there is no mistake at all in the matter. The disgustingly personal remarks which the ungentlemanly writer makes upon one lady, sufficiently prove that. Hear, once more, what the monster says."

The large orbs of Mrs. Penelope flashed through her spectacles as she read the offensive portion.

"'I 'ave *difficulté* very grate to keep out of ze sight of ze ugly ole she-dragon viz the blue feazair in ze crimson bonnet an' ze big nose vich valk be'ind, an' keep guard ovair you.'"

It took the insulted matron several seconds to gulp down the almost hysterical convulsions elicited by these heartless remarks.

"'I am the 'ugly old she-dragon!' whom the villain dares thus to stigmatize. You all know, or at least you ought to know, my taste in dress, my strict attention to the harmony of color. You all know I do wear a rich crimson bonnet, adorned with an elegant blue feather, and you must—from your studies from the *antique*—also be aware that I have a—that is—that my—nose is formed after the purest Roman type. It has frequently been remarked."

"Yes," she continued, fiercely; "both my dress and my features have been made subjects of ridicule by the tasteless writer of this contemptible scrawl.

"But there!" added the incensed lady, waving her hand with Cleopatra-like dignity, "I consign both writer and letter to the contempt they deserve; and after what has occurred I shall be Argus-like in my vigilance, and I must enjoin upon you, young ladies, to be strictly on your guard. Two points, especially, must be strictly observed. Avoid the wall, and look with horror upon pink envelopes with horrid musk. Should any such be found at any time by any one of you, let it be brought at once, unopened, to me."

Having uttered these final injunctions, Mrs. Hawk dismissed her listeners, and having informed Rose that she must consider herself a prisoner, instead of enjoying her half-holiday, she swept from the room with all the grandeur of an empress, followed by her daughters.

CHAPTER XI.

BURSTING HER BONDS.

IT seemed cruelly hard to Rose Royston to be thus curtailed of her liberty, and not less so to her friend Violet.

"Oh, dear, Rosie!" exclaimed the latter to her, "what a shame that you should be shut up in the schoolroom on this beautiful afternoon!"

She threw her arms caressingly round her companion as she spoke, and kissed her with affectionate sympathy.

"It is a shame," returned Rose, indignantly. "What have I done to be kept in? Nothing at all, only that I objected to that—what does she call it? semi-diet. If Mrs. Hawk treats me in this way I shall write to my uncle."

At this moment Miss Drudger came in to clear the schoolroom and fasten the door.

Her countenance expressed sympathy for Rose, but she had no power to reverse the sentence pronounced by the principal.

"I am sorry for you, my dears, but I must separate you," she said. "I am waiting to lock the door."

"Don't stay for me, darling," said Rose to her friend, though her lips quivered and the tears came into her eyes as she thought of the loss of her liberty.

"I shall see you again at tea-time, dear," whispered Violet, soothingly, "and I'll often come and look up at the window, if you will look out at me."

Rose promised this willingly, and in a moment after the key was turned in the lock and the friends were separated.

Violet hastened to join her club, whilst the young "Wild Rose," who had never till then known any coercion or restraint, sat down sadly in the hot, dusty schoolroom.

It must not be supposed, however, that the Jolly Girls had forgotten her.

On the contrary, they were discussing the matter earnestly when Violet came up to them.

"It's an abominable piece of injustice!" exclaimed Milly Westlake, "and we won't submit to it."

"No! no!" echoed the rest.

"Are we not members of one club?" Milly continued, "bound together by one common tie of sisterhood?"

"Most undoubtedly!"

"When one member suffers do not all the members suffer with her?"

"Of course."

"Very good. Then Rose Royston being one of us, and unjustly punished, all of us are unjustly punished."

"Decidedly."

"Ladies, such a state of things is not to be permitted. Our sister must be set at liberty."

"Yes, yes! Bravo! But how?" asked several.

"We will form a deputation," replied Milly; "go in a body to Mrs. Hawk and demand——"

"Request, perhaps, would be better," suggested Constance Grey.

"Request, then, the release of Miss Royston from captivity. We will all go."

"Yes, yes; all," cried the girls, eagerly.

"Miss Leigh, having so lately joined us, had better not accompany the deputation," Milly remarked.

"You will remain here, dear," she said to Violet. "And now let us advance to the attack, and mind, no denial."

"Victory or death!" laughed Charlotte Merry, in an assumed dramatic tone, as they went toward the house.

The two Misses Hawk saw the deputation approaching from the windows of the parlor, and felt certain some discovery had been made of a terrible nature.

Another pink envelope scented with horrid musk had been found, perhaps.

It was with considerable curiosity that the scholastic maidens awaited the arrival of the deputies.

So strongly had the mysterious exile and his impassioned billet lastened on the minds of the two Misses Hawk, that the instant Milly Westlake and her companions entered the room they made quite an eager rush toward them, and exclaimed, simultaneously: "Is it another pink one?"

The three members of the deputation, rather surprised at this question, remained silent.

At length, Milly, grasping the idea, said:

"Oh! you mean another pink envelope scented with horrid musk, don't you?"

Priscilla replied, with some hesitation and embarrassment:

"Yes; I—a—fancied, and so did my sister—didn't you, Prudence?"

"A—y-es; I thought——" assented the younger.

"We both thought," Priscilla continued, emboldened by her sister's countenance, and taking up her reply, "that, seeing you all coming together, it was barely possible you might have made some fresh discovery that would throw a light upon this mysterious business."

"Ah! this dear, delightful duck of a count!" exclaimed Constance Grey, clasping her hands in a species of either real or pretended rapture; "would—oh, would that we knew something about him!"

The principal not being present, the young ladies did not stand on such reserve with her daughters; but yet the daring expression was so near akin to high treason that Priscilla and Prudence, as the representatives of their mamma, held up their hands in horror.

"Miss Grey," they exclaimed, "we're quite surprised at you—quite, not to say shocked!"

"May I ask why?" returned Constance, who, having arrived at the mature age of seventeen, felt that she had a right to express her thoughts.

"Why," returned Priscilla, "that you should—a—express such—a—that is, evince—a—so much curiosity about this dreadful—I, perhaps, ought rather to say unfortunate—incognito."

"Especially after what mamma said," added Prudence, rather sharply.

"I can't help feeling curious about this stranger," went on Constance, boldly; "and besides, your mamma is not present now."

"But we are, miss," was the grand reply of the Hawk *filles*, with a flush of the maternal dignity.

"Oh, but you are girls like ourselves," returned the undaunted Constance; "and to be a girl, and not to feel a strong interest in a pink love-letter, written by nobody and addressed to no one, is an utter impossibility."

The Misses Hawk were compelled inwardly to indorse this remark, and after a moment Priscilla said, in a gently modified tone:

"But it is a dangerous subject, dear, and should not be dwelt upon."

"And very possibly that's the very reason why we do dwell on it," interposed Milly Westlake.

Priscilla and Prudence made a slight effort to look distressed, but failed signally.

Their mental rigidity was fast relaxing, and Milly, observing this, continued:

"You mustn't think Con is alone in her curiosity. We're all dying to know who this poor, dear fellow is."

"Oh, yes, that we are," joined in Charlotte Merry, with the utmost vivacity. "I know I am! I never felt so interested about anybody I had never seen in my life."

"Yes, and I'll be bound," added Constance Grey, with a laugh, "that if we could see the hearts of Miss Priscilla and Miss Prudence at this moment, we should find that they are both just as anxious as we are about this distracting exile."

This bold shot went straight home to the very hearts of those at whom it was discharged, and they blushed scarlet.

"Sh! sh! pray," whispered Priscilla, in an anxious whisper; "if mamma were to hear you!"

Her younger sister, with her face all aglow, hurried to the door, and, opening it slightly, listened.

"Mamma is asleep, I think. I don't hear her," she said, after a moment, as she reclosed the door.

The ice being now thoroughly broken on the subject of the illustrious exile, the restraint, which had been gradually growing less and less, was thrown aside altogether, and the whole party went deeply into the mysterious incident with an earnestness equal to its novelty and importance.

Five girls together, and an unknown lover as the topic to be discussed—what could be more engrossing?

So absorbing was it that the original intentions of the deputation were entirely forgotten, till at length Milly Westlake exclaimed, suddenly:

"Oh, poor Rose! We've never once thought of her. What a set of selfish brutes we are!"

"Are you speaking of Miss Royston?" asked Priscilla.

"Yes," replied Milly; "she is kept in this afternoon, and we came to beg for her release. Do let her out?"

"Oh, I dare not!" affirmed Priscilla.

"Oh, yes, you do," returned Milly, good-naturedly.

"But you know how determined mamma is," suggested Prudence.

"Yes," returned Constance, with a smile; "but mamma is asleep at this moment, and will probably not awake until tea-time. And so I think you might set Rose at liberty on your own responsibility; or, if not, couldn't you go and ask Mrs. Hawk?"

"I don't think it is worth troubling her about," said Priscilla. "She never likes to be disturbed when she is reposing."

"Then, is the prisoner free?" asked the girls.

"Well, yes. You may tell Anne Drudger to unlock the door and release her."

There was a murmur of delight at this, and with many thanks the deputation trooped to the door in high spirits.

Priscilla followed them out, and seizing upon Milly, she said to her, in strict confidence:

"If you should gain any further clue to the mystery, you will not fail to let me know, will you? And in case of—another pink letter being discovered, you will be quite sure to bring it to me first, won't you?—and I will convey it to mamma."

Milly promised, and then hurried away with her companions to release Rose Royston.

Miss Drudger was quickly discovered seated on a camp-stool in the playground.

The kind-hearted assistant readily accompanied them to the schoolroom.

But when the door was opened it was found, much to the surprise of all, that the room was empty. The window, however, was open.

The prisoner had evidently set herself at liberty.

Poor Anne Drudger looked up in dismay at the open window, which was protected by iron bars with sharp points at the top, and marveled how the young captive could have mastered them.

But she was ignorant of Rose's country experience, or she would have known that ordinary feats of climbing were regarded by her as very simple and easy achievements.

At all events, she was gone, and Violet being also missing, it was reasonably supposed that the friends accompanied each other.

There was a brief conference amongst the members of the club, and then Milly Westlake cried, suddenly:

"Let us go in search of them; we shall find them, no doubt, somewhere. The idea of getting out of that window! Well, she is a Jolly Girl, and no mistake."

(To be continued.)

"Wild Rose and Violet" was commenced in No. 644.

A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

A FEW days since a young gentleman who resides in Bedford, W. Va., was crossing the Blue Ridge on foot, when he lost his way and wandered until night. Afraid to sleep on the ground, he climbed a large chestnut-tree, which had been broken off by the wind, and seeing that the hollow top was filled with leaves, crawled into it. The tree proved to be a mere shell, hollow to the roots, and the young man of course went to the bottom, a distance of about forty feet.

The only aperture through which he could breathe was a small hole not larger than his hand, and he at once commenced the work of enlarging it by picking off the wood with his fingers. Shortly before dark on the following evening he emerged from what he had first considered a living tomb.

Unless no circumstances, if you can avoid it, ask a favor, not even from your nearest and dearest friends. Give as many as you can, and if they are freely offered it is not necessary to be too proud to take them; but never ask for, or stand waiting for any.

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

LXXXV.—ST. PETERSBURG BAKER DELIVERING BREAD—NOBLEMAN'S COACHMAN, WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILD.

THIS is an outdoor scene of Russian life; the old, bareheaded baker man on his round, with his round, flat loaves tied together, biscuit-shaped and biscuit-like; the coachman of some nobleman or well-to-do burgher, whose business has given profit and plenty. This man and his family have a clean, tidy look about them that in itself would lead our readers to form a very incorrect idea of Russian servants. The question of domestic labor is one that racks the brains and strains the nerves and spoils the tempers of housekeepers in all civilized countries. What they are in Russia let a friend tell, who took up his abode, with his wife, in St. Petersburg a few years ago:

We began our housekeeping with four servants—a key-keeper (housekeeper we should style her), a cook, a room-girl, or housemaid, and a lootman. When they had shaken themselves into their places, we found they had all to learn experience in the duties expected of them. But each stuck with amusing firmness to a single duty. When the cook had cooked, she lay down on a bench in the kitchen and slept out the rest of the day. When the room-girl had dusted the chairs and tables, she also squatted on the floor and slept. When the lad had waited at table, and carried the dirty dishes to the kitchen, he rolled himself up double in a corner of the lobby.

When anything was wanted from any of them, they had to be roused up with kicks or cold water; shaking was but a vain exercise. The key-keeper not having any keys to manage (there was not yet a lock in the house, except on bureau-drawers), slept steadily, and moved the sleep of the just all day and all night on one of our sofas, as rather a more dignified place than the floor for a key-keeper. Beds they had none, and beds they did not want, nor ever had wanted. The breakfast-dishes were put on the table for tea, as they had been taken away dirty the evening before.

"Cook, why did you not clean the tea-things?"

"Madame, I am cook. I cannot clean dishes."

"Polygne, why did you not clean the dishes?"

"Madame, I am room-girl, and dust."

"Evan, why did you not do it?"

"Madame, I am lackey, and wait."

Of course the key-keeper was miles above this. So they all went off to their lairs, and we sent for a dish-washer.

At the end of the week the floors wanted washing, and a question arose who was to do it. The cook cooked, the room-girl dusted, the lackey waited, the scullery-maid washed dishes, and the key-keeper did nothing but sleep. My wife was making up her mind to be her own key-keeper, as she thought the sleeping on the sofa might be accomplished by herself if necessary, but she could not scrub the floors. The others, even on promise of an addition to their wages, refused in a body. "Too much work, madame; cannot be done." They all evidently were working for the "stick," but we did not believe in the "stick." The upshot was that four outsiders were hired to come once a week to wash the floors.

It was the same with washing clothes and getting up linen. A woman was engaged for the one duty, and the other had to be done by my wife, because no one could be got who knew what it meant.

"Evan, why the dence have my boots not been cleaned these three days?"

"If you please, baron, I am lackey, not boot-cleaner," said Evan.

So he rolled himself up again in his corner, and was snoring immediately.

A boot-cleaner was, of course, hired; then a man to cut and fetch wood, and another to cut it into small pieces and keep the fires up.

Thus had my establishment increased in one week to thirteen souls. The wages of these people were small, it is true, but higher wages had no charm to induce extra exertion. Let our ladies think much of Betty and Jane; complain less, use them well, speak kindly to them, and one Betty will do more—and more faithful—work than all my thirteen Russians, with thirty thirteens to that. Now all these Russian servants must be led, and that means something; not that their nominal food is much, but that the real consumption in the way of theft is beyond calculation.

READ! READ! READ!
OUR NEW STORIES!

Floating to Fortune;
Or,
Which was the Hero.

Inventive Ben;
Or,
How a Boy Became a Jack-of-all-Trades and Master, Too.

Wild Rose and Violet;
Or,
Fun at Mrs. Hawk's;
And
Three Merry Boys:
Their Adventures at School.

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1. Lighthouse. 2. Oriole, Reader, Invest, Odeans, Lesser, Ertara. 3. R, Net, Niche, Receive, Thine, Eve, E. 4. Sneell. Fraisk, Egress, Corf U, Imanl, Engen K. 5. You, Ewe, Yew, Hew, Hogh, Hue. 6. Work-box. 7. Orbit, Vanish, Ethic, Risk. 8. Will-i-am. 9. Woman, Ovine, Miles, Ament, Neats. 10. Capuchin, Punch, Paunch, Panic, Pinch, Pain, China.

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ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC

1.—CHARADE.

Behens take you set down
And prefix fifties three;
A term used by architects
Then you will see.

2.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

A consonant; an individual; desert; a Mohammedan; a city where a council was held; a beverage; a consonant.

3.—DELETIONS.

Delete a substance very hard,
And then you'll find a town in France;
Delete a jovial, merry feast,
And find an old-time country dance.
Delete one source of lady's cares,
And yet what ev'ry lady wears.
A pastime loved by youth delete,
A fish you'll see that's nice to eat.
Delete a weight—a lakelet find;
A number next—you're brought to mind;
Then last delete a word for gain,
And to entice will then remain.

4.—SQUARE WORDS.

A vessel; one who rants; blue; a crossing; threes.

5.—CHARADE.

Philosophers have all agreed
Among themselves, I ween,
That for a woman to succeed
As first is never seen.

The learned also in their might
Have laid down as a rule
That when a man a book would write
My second he must use aright,
Or else the man's a fool.

Now, gentle reader, should you like
What means my whole to see,
When angry men do fight and strike
My whole they use in enmity.

6.—SQUARE WORDS.

A name of one of Victor Hugo's works; the god of poetry and music; small sails above the topsail; a Swiss canton; to refer to; reverse of gains.

7.—ENIGMA.

A race I run with the glorious sun;
I dance with the waving trees;
Yet dark and deep, I reign over sleep,
On the wings of the midnight breeze.
In Luna's light I dream at night;
I dwell on the brow of care,
I frolic wild with the laughing child
As he chases me here and there.
I am nothing known on this wide earth zone,
Yet the mightiest in the land,
Walk ever with me, yet, with mocking glee,
I am thrown by each outstretched hand.
I lightly float with the swift sea-boat,
Where the placid waters flow;
Gane over the side like a fair sea bride
And I'm seen in the depths below.

8.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Primals plead away,
So the ancients say
Until she finals became;
My primals repeat—
Mountains give it complete,
My first and my second the same.

1. What comes before to-morrow,
The cause of all our sorrow?

2. A very sharp reply,
And what doctors oft apply.

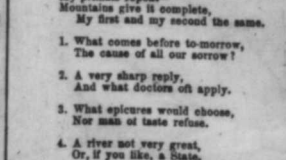
3. What epicures would choose,
Nor man of taste refuse.

4. A river not very great,
Or, if you like, a State.

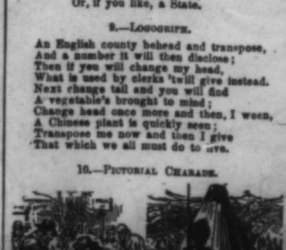
9.—LOGOGRIPH.

An English county behead and transpose,
And a number it will then disclose;
Then if you will change my head,
What is used by clerks 'twill give instead.
Next change tail and you will find
A vegetable's brought to mind;
Change head once more and then, I ween,
A Chinese plant is quickly seen;
Transpose me now and then I give
That which we all must do to live.

10.—PICTORIAL CHARADE.



First Part. Third Part.



Second Part. The Whole.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

FREDDY'S RACE.

A young man sits upon a seat, under a shady tree,
A handkerchief o'er his sleepy face, a novel on his knee,
And Freddy in his laziness is happy as can be.
A smile irradiates his face—you hear him mutter,
"Work?"
Ah, wouldn't it be happiness to be a lazy Turk:
To have no governor to say, "Your business you shirk?"
A shadow falls upon his book, but Freddy doesn't see,
And murmurs on as tranquilly, as happy as can be,
"Vacation is a jolly thing—at least, it is to me."
The shadow softly creepeth now out of its hiding-place,
And suddenly the handkerchief is pulled from off his face;
The shadow with it speeds away, as if to run a race.
Down drops the book, and Fred descries a figure yet in view;
"To run a race a day like this," quoth Fred, "is something new;
But I'll make the thief's acquaintance, if I run a mile or two."
The thief has run a distance since it leapt the garden wall—
Is racing o'er the field beyond, and never does it fall,
Or stop, or even look behind, to Freddy's frantic call.
"I'll have my handkerchief, you thief!" gasps poor, despairing Fred;
And, taking off his neckerchief, he ties it round his head—
His hat has gone, the sun is hot, so this must serve instead.
Along the path and o'er the stile the shadow swiftly flies,
But Freddy cannot get at him, though very hard he tries;
"Oh, bother you, you tiresome imp!" cries he, with tearful eyes.
Now, suddenly, the imp in question tries to clear a gate,
But stumbles most ungracefully, and damages its pate;
It tears the handkerchief in two, and grins a grin of hate.
Fred, in the distance, sees it fall, and, red as any flunky,
Comes racing up. "Oh, hawk!" cries he, "I am an awful donkey!"
There on the grass, with rueful face, sits—Jago, Freddy's monkey!

A COUNTRY apothecary, being out for a day's shooting, took his errand-boy to carry his game-bag. Entering a field of turnips the dog pointed, and the boy, overjoyed at the prospect of his master's success, exclaimed, "Lor, master, there's a covey; if you don't near 'em, won't you physic 'em?" "Physic them, you young rascal, what do you mean?" said the doctor. "Why, kill 'em, to be sure," replied the lad.

A BOY was lately caught stealing currants, and was locked up in a dark closet by the grocer. The boy commenced begging most pathetically to be released, and after using all the persuasions that his young mind could invent, he proposed, "Now, if you'll let me out and send for my father, he'll pay you for the currants and lick me besides." The grocer could not withstand this appeal, and released the urchin.

IN HIS STOCKINGS.

They shoveled along on a window-sill in the post-office to give Wicked Jack room to sit down, and then resumed their conversation about Santa Claus's gifts. One boy got a knife, another a pair of skates, and the third stammered a little as he stated that he received a diamond pin.

"And you traded it for a dog?" inquired one.

"Well, no. I gave it to the baby to play with and he swallowed it."

"Diamonds is good 'nuff for common butchbacks," observed Jack, as he cleaned his nails with a tooth-pick, "but you orter seen the gold watch I got! I tell you the fourteen diamonds and twenty-one pearls in the cases made me scream right out when I hauled it from the stocking! I was so weak in the knees I scarcely got down town."

"And is it up home?" inquired a boy with a frost-bitten ear.

"Up home! Do you think I'm 'lasses candy?" scornfully replied Jack, as he got down. "Not much! I rented it to a member of the legislature at two dollars per day."

TRYING TO TEACH GEOLOGY.

It is the hardest sort of work to teach an ignorant man if he thinks he knows all about a subject. The instructor, besides having his labor for his pains, is likely to excite the contempt of his pupil.

A gentleman acquainted with geology, while traveling through the valley of the Guadalupe, Texas, came across a farmer who showed him two curious fossils.

"This is a petrified cow's tail," said the farmer, "and this is a buck's horn. The animal must have been a big one to carry such a thing on his head."

The gentleman remarked that they were ancient sea-shells, fossils which told of the time when the country was covered by the sea. The farmer looked at him with an expression which plainly said, "Are you a fool, or do you take me for one?"

"Here's a thing," he said, bringing forth a fossil which was the tooth of an iguanodon, "that's norter strange, but I've studied it out that it was some sort of a weapon made by the injuns."

"No, sir," replied the geologist; "this is a tooth of the great lizard of the ancient world, whose body was sixty feet long."

"You're a fool," quietly remarked the farmer.

"That," he added, as he kicked another fossil, "is a petrified wasp's-nest."

"Excuse me," politely interposed the would-be instructor, "but that is a fragment of coral which grew when the cretaceous ocean rolled over this land."

The farmer looked at the man of geology with an expression which seemed to say:

"Well, dog you, I'll allow to give you a good licking!"

The geologist left him adhering to Brown's tail, buck's horn, Indian weapon and wasp's-nest.

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BLINKINGTON AND SOPPINGTON.

BARNABY BLINKINGTON was a man known to all the generality of human beings inhabiting the little town of Blinkington. To have denied any knowledge of Barnaby would have been equal to ignoring President Hayes, and I am sure that no good citizen of the United States would ignore that worthy and respected individual.

Barnaby Blinkington was a famous man; a man among a thousand; a man you would not like to offend; a man that you rarely hear of, much less see; in short, Barnaby Blinkington was a very remarkable man.

When a young man, Barnaby had pitched his tent on a spot of ground; others had done the same, others still had done the very same, until, at the moment we speak of, Blinkington was a prosperous and populous little town. It boasted of a town hall, music hall, medical hall and many other halls too numerous to mention; a railway station, fire department, police force, etc., etc. In short, Blinkington bade fair to become one of the most populous cities of the United States.

Imagine the feelings of the great Blinkington as he gazed upon the prosperous city that had sprung from his little tent! No wonder that Barnaby was a great man. No wonder that the richest householder and the veriest "bummer" bowed to the great Blinkington as he passed.

Barnaby Blinkington was, at the time I speak of, a man of some sixty years of age, hale and hearty, jovial and contented, at peace with every one, and in a general state of placid beatitude.

Barnaby's riches had grown with Blinkington's houses, and consequently Barnaby was a rich man. Rich and comfortable, and, to complete all, he was still a jolly bachelor.

Living in his large new house in company with his niece, her husband, and Baby Barnaby, as the male offspring of this nephew and niece was called, he passed his time in joyous contentment.

It took a very great deal to disturb Barnaby's peace of mind—a very great deal, and that great deal was the sight of an insurance agent. Yes, the great Blinkington, the rich Blinkington, the powerful and respected Blinkington, had one mortal dread, one haunting ghost, and that ghost was a scapegrace nephew of the name of Thomas Blinkington, who, in the adjoining town of Soppington, followed the lucrative calling of an insurance agent.

The mortal feud between Barnaby and his nephew was of very long standing.

When a very small boy Tom had dared to *hint* that Blinkington would not prosper, and that Soppington would; consequently that small boy was very unceremoniously kicked out of Blinkington, and had never dared to set his feet within its precincts again.

The whole town of Blinkington had joined in the feud against Barnaby's nephew, and the whole town of Soppington had joined in the feud against Blinkington; consequently for many, many years Blinkingtonians and Soppingtonians had gazed upon each other with looks of hatred, disgust and contempt. But in spite of this deadly enmity, both Blinkington and Soppington had prospered, and Tom Blinkington had prospered as well as his fortunate uncle.

Tom had become an insurance agent and had insured the whole town of Soppington, consequently the town of Blinkington would *not* be insured.

Indeed, the few venturesome agents, who, in blissful ignorance of the deadly feud that existed between the two towns, had dared to venture their confiding persons into the town of Blinkington, had bitterly repented of their rashness, and had been driven from the town with mingled hoots and jeers. One persistent individual, who would *not* be convinced that Blinkington would *not* be insured, was set upon by the indignant townspeople, and was so badly treated that when he reached the headquarters of the company in New York, he was so severely shaken that he was forced to retire, a broken-hearted and dispirited man, to the wild regions of Brooklyn, and give up the insurance business for ever.

The fate of this unhappy individual was a warning to others, and from that day no insurance agent could be found who had a sufficient disregard for his personal safety as to venture to ask a Blinkingtonian to insure his property.

The historical feud between the Blinkingtonians and Soppingtonians was carried to such an extent, that the inhabitants of these two haughty towns refused even to salute each other, and as of course they could not intermarry, the population of the United States bid fair to suffer in consequence. It was even said that many members of the Senate were in favor of passing a law *forcing* the two inimical towns to intermarry under pain of transportation. But this report is not substantiated by any legal documents, therefore we are inclined to side with the inhabitants of some of the adjoining towns, who repeatedly assert that the whole report was got up by a select committee of unmarriageable old maids, who, despairing of obtaining husbands by fair means, employed this base artifice to catch a loving swain.

Of course, this state of things could not last, and the affair came to a head some few weeks ago.

Blinkington was wrapped in a deep repose; not a sound was to be heard.

Suddenly a terrible cry resounds through the still night.

BLINKINGTON AND SOPPINGTON.—THE FIRE AT BLINKINGTON'S HOUSE.

"Fire! fire! fire!"

It was the very first fire that had occurred in that town, and the terror-stricken inhabitants ran wildly here and there, creating a fearful confusion, and doing no good.

The gallant fire-brigade, in which they had taken so much pride, vainly endeavored to quench the flames.

Onward they rushed, devouring everything in their way, and, like hungry demons, continually wanting more.

Hark! what is that?

Far in the distance the terrified inhabitants of Blinkington hear the dull rumble of wheels, and soon, with a clashing and clattering, the Soppingtonian Fire Brigade comes to the rescue of Blinkington.

The historical feud is forgotten, deafening cheers ring through the air, and Blinkingtonians and Soppingtonians vie with each other in their endeavors to extinguish the flames.

The devouring flame has now reached the grand new house of the founder of Blinkington, of the deadly enemy of insurance agents.

Oh, how he longed for a sight of his nephew at this moment! The house is soon one mass of flames, and it is with great difficulty that himself, Baby Barnaby, his niece and her husband, are saved.

Humbled is the pride of the great Blinkington. Gone is the hatred for Tom, the insurance agent, and as this last-named worthy rushes frantically upon the scene, his repentant uncle falls sobbing upon his breast.

Needless to say that they were reconciled. Needless to say that Blinkington insured itself to the last plank the very next day. Needless to say that Tom did a bright business. Needless to say that the feud was eternally forgotten, and needless to say that at the present moment there are not two happier, more contented, and more prosperous towns than Blinkington and Soppington.

The proposer shook his head. He could not say.

"He!" cried the king, "we will try him. Look ye, he shall preach in our chapel next Sunday afternoon, and I will be there. But he is to have no sermon prepared. I will myself, when I enter the chapel, place in his hand a sealed packet within which he will find the text, and from that text he will preach his sermon."

The ecclesiastic was consulted, and readily consented to the proposition. The eventful day arrived, and the clergyman entered the chapel, and, as he passed up the centre aisle, an officer in gaudy uniform—aide-de-camp of the king—put a sealed packet in his hand, at the same time whispering:

"From His Majesty."

The clergyman ascended to the pulpit, read the Scriptures, gave out the two hymns, made an appropriate prayer, in which the king was recognized without fulsomeness, and then he arose and broke the seal of the missive he had received, and found it—blank! Not a word, not a pen-mark appeared. With a calm smile, the clergyman cast his eyes over the congregation, and then said:

"Brethren and sisters, here is nothing," and he held up the paper to show that it was blank. "Blessed is he whom nothing can make afraid, or swerve from his duty. We read that God made from nothing all things! And look at the stupendous majesty of His infinite creation."

And thereon the candidate went on with a powerful and eloquent discourse on the wonders and beauties of creation. Suffice it to say that Frederick bestowed upon him the vacant chaplaincy, and that in time he came to be the king's chief confidant and spiritual adviser.

A GENIUS LOST TO THE WORLD.

A YOUTHFUL hero named Michael S. once worked for me at the type case. He was a good compositor, and a capital good fellow; but he got the idea into his head that he wanted to be an actor, and from that time he was not easy until he had tried his best. It was in the palmy days of the old National, under Pelby. Charley Saunders had gone upon the stage at the same theatre, and was playing minor characters very acceptably.

Now Charley and Mike had been playmates, though Charley was a few years the elder, and, "If Charley Saunders can play, why can't I?" nazed Mike. He worked, and botherd, and fretted, and intrigued, until finally the stage manager, Hamilton, told him he might come and try. For a time he made himself generally useful about the theatre and on the stage, but at length he was given the part of page, in an old English comedy, wherein he was to be finely dressed, and to open his mouth and speak before an audience. Mike was in ecstasies.

He came up to the office and told us of his coming "first appearance." Of course we went down to see. I forget the name of the play, but I shall never forget that Hamilton enacted the part of Lord Randolph, and that Mike's first entrance as page was for the purpose of delivering to Randolph the simple message, "My lord, the banquet waits." Mike came on, and as he stepped in sight of the glaring lights, and the greater glare of the thousand faces of the audience, his knees shook beneath him, and he clutched his plumed hat in agony. It was plain to be seen he had forgotten the words.

I had heard him spout whole pages from Shakespeare with real unction; but it had not been on the boards. Ah, how different! "Well!" hissed Hamilton, with an impatient tap of the toe. Thus urged, poor Mike made one expiring effort. He could not remember the text, but he did the best he could. "Mr. Randolph," he gasped, "the folks are waiting for you. Supper's ready!" The stage lost a star, but we gained back a good compositor.

PRESENCE OF MIND.

ONCE upon a time, so runs the most authentic story, one of the Great Frederick's favorite chaplains was taken from him by the hand of death. The peculiar qualities in the deceased ecclesiastic had not been more his devout piety and heartfelt reverence than his own courage in danger and presence of mind in seasons of astonishment. Said the great king:

"Ah, me! where shall I find another man so truly devout and so conscientiously devoted to his religious duty, who will at the same time possess such wondrous presence of mind! Ah! Good Father Isaac's wits were never wanting."

At length, however, a candidate was recommended to his favorable consideration—a man known to be pious and devout, and against whom no breath of scandal had ever been turned.

"But what is his courage?" demanded Frederick. "What would he do in a moment of mental terror which had burst unexpectedly over his head?"

ABSENCE OF MIND.—Bude, whom Erasmus calls the wonder of France, was a thoroughly absent-minded man. One day his domestic broke into his study with the intelligence that the house was on fire. "Go inform my wife," said he; "you know I never interfere with domestic affairs." Lessing, the German philosopher, being remarkably absent-minded, knocked at his own door one evening, when the servant, looking out of the window, and not recognizing him, said: "The professor is not at home." "Oh, very well," said Lessing, composedly walking away; "I shall call another time."